



















INCHIQUIN,  
THE JESUIT'S LETTERS,

DURING A LATE RESIDENCE IN  
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:

BEING  
A FRAGMENT  
OF  
A PRIVATE CORRESPONDENCE,

ACCIDENTALLY DISCOVERED

IN EUROPE ;

CONTAINING A FAVOURABLE VIEW OF THE MANNERS, LITERATURE, AND STATE OF SOCIETY, OF THE UNITED STATES, AND A REFUTATION OF MANY OF THE ASPERSIONS CAST UPON THIS COUNTRY, BY FORMER RESIDENTS AND TOURISTS.

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BY SOME UNKNOWN FOREIGNER.

*Chas J. Fisher*

Veduti Ubaldo, in giovinezza e cerchi  
Varj costumi avea, varj paesi,  
Peregrinando dai piu freddi cerchi  
Del nosiro mondo agli Etiopi accesi :  
E come uom che virtute e senno merchi,  
Le favelle, le usanze, e i riti appresi.

Tasso La Gierusalemme Liberata,  
Canto decimoquarto.

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NEW-YORK:

Printed and published by I. Riley.

1810.

*skit  
meyer*

## DISTRICT OF NEW-YORK, ss.

**B**E IT REMEMBERED, That on the twenty-second day of December, in the thirty-fifth year of the Independence of the United States of America, ISAAC RILEY of the said district, hath deposited in this office the title of a book, the right whereof he claims as proprietor, in the words following, to wit :

“Inchiquin, the Jesuit's Letters, during a late residence in the United States of America : being a fragment of a private correspondence, accidentally discovered in Europe ; containing a favourable view of the manners, literature, and state of society, of the United States, and a refutation of many of the aspersions cast upon this country, by former residents and tourists. By some unknown foreigner.

“Veduti Ubaldo, in giovinezza e cerchi

“Varj costumi avea, varj paesi,

“Peregrinando dai piu freddi cerchi

“Del nostro mondo agli Etiopi accesi :

“E come uom che virtute e senno merchi,

“Le favelle, le usanze, e i riti appresi.

“Tasso La Gierusalemme Liberata,

“Canto decimoquarto.”

IN CONFORMITY to the act of the Congress of the United States, entitled, “An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned ;” and also to an act, entitled, “An act, supplementary to an act, entitled, an act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned, and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving and etching historical and other prints.”

CHARLES CLINTON,  
Clerk of the District of New-York.



# PREFACE.

## THE JESUIT'S LETTERS.

*Some Letters, supposed to have been written by, and to, an Irish Jesuit, during his residence in the United States of America.*

THE letters here published, were bought at a bookseller's stall in the street, in Antwerp, for the humble consideration of a French crown. They were tied up together in an envelope, on which was written, "Letters from America." From internal evidence, and as a more saleable designation, they have been denominated "The Jesuit's Letters." They are given to the world by the American editor, precisely as he has been assured they were found in manuscript, without any encroachments upon their disposition or matter. Where \* \* occur, the words were carefully marked out with a pen, beyond the possibility of restoration. The same method had been pursued to conceal the names; but with less success: for though it cannot be pretended that they are unquestionably reclaimed, yet great pains have brought them nearly to light; and, it is believed, those herein prefixed are almost, if not quite, the same that were subscribed to the originals. This, however, is a matter of no great moment, as it can hardly be doubted the names are fictitious, and therefore they afford no clew to the correspondents.

The purchaser from the bookseller at Antwerp, was not an American, and had not the patience, though well acquainted with the English language, in which they are written, to decypher the whole MS.; but he explored enough to awaken a common curiosity to know something of the authors. With this view, he returned to the stall, and inquired of the bookseller, from whom he obtained the papers; but could collect nothing more, than that a mendicant, some weeks before, offered them for sale, and parted with them readily for three livres.

Their existence came accidentally to the ears of an American, travelling in Flanders, to whom, on his expressing a wish to have them, they were courteously presented by the purchaser; and from whom we received them for publication.

It is evident, from several passages, that they were written by an Irishman, who must have resided some time in this country, less biassed by prejudices, than most of our European visitants. Indeed, the inducement to publish these letters, arose not so much from any intrinsic merit they can boast, as from the candid and favourable view they exhibit of the United States.

As they might have tended to dispel some of the false medium, through which we are obscurely seen from the other side of the Atlantic, it is to be regretted, they were not originally published there. But whether they were composed for publication; how many of them may have been suppressed or miscarried; or, indeed, what their author's object was in this country, are altogether matters of conjecture; though it is probable, that no more than a detachment from a larger correspondence has fallen into our hands.

It is not necessary to detail the reasons which have led to a belief, that the principal writer, if not some of the others, must have been attached to the company of Jesuits. Independent of a positive declaration to that amount, in one of the letters, there are other, though trivial, circumstances, corroborative of such an opinion. The modern Charlemagne has many motives for re-establishing that order: and the germs of another Paraguay may be intended for our soil. Of this, however, every reader will be enabled to form his own judgment; for, indeed, the very air of mystery in which the correspondence is shrouded, may itself be counterfeit, and put on to give a false importance to things in themselves insignificant.

As, however, the letters are ascribed to a Jesuit, it may be proper to state briefly, that the order of Jesuits, after being broken up, and the members successively expelled from the different nations of Europe, was finally suppressed and abolished by Pope Gregory XIV. in 1773. In addition to the three vows of poverty, chastity and monastic servitude, in order to obtain, in the first instance, a confirmation of their mysterious institution, they were obliged to assume a fourth, that of obedience to the pope; binding themselves to go and to serve, without reward, in the cause

of religion, wheresoever he should command. The fundamental maxim of the society was, that instead of being buried in monkish sloth and solitude, they should devote themselves to more active beneficence. In return for absolution from all pious austerities and mortifications, they declared themselves the champions of truth, and crusaders against its enemies. To promote the service of religion in all parts of the globe, the instruction of youth and the ignorant, to observe the transactions of the world, to study the characters and dispositions of persons in authority, to inform themselves of the policy of governments and genius of nations, were the pursuits to which they dedicated their lives; pursuits, in themselves, most laudable; however they might be perverted to improper purposes. In order to facilitate and support their missions, the Jesuits were permitted to trade with the countries they visited; and formerly were engaged in extensive and lucrative commerce, both in the East and West Indies. About the beginning of the 17th century, they made a settlement on the river Plate, in the province of Paraguay, in South America, where their empire was distinguished by wisdom and tranquillity.

For many years past, this once flourishing and influential association, has been degraded, dispersed and diminishing. Their name has become a designation for intrigue and duplicity; and the few that remain, have drained to the dregs the chalice of humiliation. If it has been contemplated to revive the order and restore its privileges, it is probable, that for the vow of obedience to the pope, now no longer necessary, another would be substituted, binding them to the destinies of the extraordinary personage to whom their elevation would be owing; who is incessantly rearing religious, as well as political ramparts round his throne; and who, from such partisans, might derive, for himself and his dynasty, the most essential services.

But this is all surmise. And of its probability, as well as of the object of the writer of these letters, whether political, commercial, or ecclesiastical; and whether in truth the whole be not a fabrication, their readers, we repeat, must determine for themselves.









## LETTER I.\*

CHARLEMONT TO INCHIQUIN.

Dated at Paris.

My dear preceptor and friend,

ACCORDING to promise I send after you the notice of St. Pierre, which I procured from M. de —, too late to mould into the exercise you desired, before your departure from \*\*\*.† As it is authentic, being in part communicated by the philosopher himself to M. de —, and the rest having passed under his observation, you are at liberty to communicate it to our friends at Baltimore, or any others, who may be desirous of learning particulars concerning so distinguished and amiable a votary of science.

James Henry Bernardin de St. Pierre was born in the District of Caux, in the Province of Normandy, of an ancient and respectable family: being a near relation to the Abbé St. Pierre, celebrated for his

\* This letter is a translation from the French, in which the original is written.....E.

† One word is erased here.

scientific acquirements, and especially for his project of a perpetual peace ; with which the good Cardinal Fleury was so well pleased, as to write to Fontenelle that it would be happy for mankind if princes would take a dose of the elixir of that excellent project. The Author of the *Studies of Nature* resembles his relation the Abbé in goodness of heart and depth of knowledge, and surpasses him in genius and the powers of elegant composition. At an early age, he entered upon the profession of arms, and travelled in Russia and Poland. Upon his return, he was sent, in the capacity of an engineer, to the Isle of France ; which useful colony owes its continued preservation from capture by the English, during the protracted maritime war, in which they have gained nearly all the other French colonies, in great measure, to be sure, to the natural ruggedness of its coast, but in no inconsiderable degree to the excellent fortifications constructed under the direction of St. Pierre.

On his return to France, he renounced his situation in the army as too restrictive of the freedom for study and contemplation he longed to enjoy. Being thus deprived of his pay as an officer ; and having generously relinquished what patrimonial estate he had, in favour of a sister, his finances fell to a very low ebb, his prospects were overcast with gloom, and the fate of genius seemed to threaten to be his. But he neither repined, nor abandoned himself to despair. While thus struggling with want and uncertainty, he formed an acquaintance with John James Rousseau, whom he resembled in lofty talents, excessive sensibility, and devotion to retirement : though there was

none of Rousseau's desponding and unsociable humour about his friend St. Pierre.

Owing in part to the instances of M. de —, he was prevailed upon to shake off the scholastic diffidence, and the poverty under which he was sinking into solitude, and to present himself to certain personages about the court of Louis XVI. distinguished by their stations, and beneficence to men of letters in indigence. The person, of all others, who has now the honour to have interested herself in favour of St. Pierre, was Madame Neckar, wife of the great financier; to whom he was indebted for the patronage of the king, and several eminent characters of his household.

It was at one time generally feared, that St. Pierre had fallen a victim to the revolution. But he providentially escaped the perils of that tempest, to live serenely to a good old age, blessing and blessed by his learning, cheerfulness and benevolence.

We observe, with pleasure, that Professor Barton, of Philadelphia, whom, through his scientific researches, we know as one of the only men of letters in America, has given his countrymen an edition of the *Studies of Nature*. But it is to be regretted, that he has not introduced his work with any biographical sketch of the author: because, independent of the desire of most readers to know something of the life of the writer they admire, the qualities of St. Pierre's mind are so strongly reflected in his works, that all persons must read them with greater pleasure and instruction, from knowing that they faithfully repre-

sent the virtues and simplicity of the author's character.

It is probable the world would have been gratified with many other of St. Pierre's productions, had he not, at rather a late day, sacrificed his additional fame to marriage, and the tame enticements of domestic life. This sin against science he attempted to extenuate to his friends, by the proverb "Better late than never;" to which with much greater propriety they might have replied, "Better never than late." Or early either, say I. For what has a being dedicated to academic shades, and attenuated with study, to do with the everlasting distractions of a family? There are no more insurmountable barriers to literary attainments, than chubby children and a charming wife. Literary men are but indifferent propagators of any other species than letters; and Madame Dacier herself would be no better than a hindrance in the pursuit of learning. The emperor showed his usual good sense in permitting the marriage of priests; because it not only renders their lives both happier and more exemplary, but serves also to replenish population. But as the interest of letters is one of the nearest his imperial heart, would he not, in return for this dispensation to the priesthood, have done well by enjoining celibacy on all academicians and philosophers?

\* \* \* \*

The reign of Louis XIV. is called the Augustan age of France. Yet all the pensions given by that monarch to men of letters, amounted to no more than



66,300 livres; 52,300 to Frenchmen, and 14,000 to foreigners. Whereas since his present majesty has shone from the throne of France, I suppose sixty thousand times that amount has been appropriated to the same noble purpose.

\* \* \* \*

Apropos of the sex. Pray do not fail to give us details of their appearance, manners, and education (if they have any) in America. Even the faces, figures, and costume of the American females, if not unworthy your pen, would be agreeable to our perusal. I presume they are infinitely mixed. What with the original English leaven, the aboriginal Indian, the Mulatto, the Creole, African, and other crosses, they must be a most curiously heterogeneous and streaked kind. From all these mixtures there can be no predominant complexion: few fair, and none ruddy. A torrid sun has gilded them with his cadaverous hues, driving the rose from their cheeks, with the verdure from their fields. I have always understood they marry early, breed fast, fade soon, and die young. Do the sexes meet freely at places of public resort? Was there ever such a thing as an intrigue in the United States of America? I think I should enjoy an amour with a squaw, string her bow, feather her arrows, run races with her, pick up her tomahawk, sharpen her scalping knife, play with her long nose-bobs, and sing guttural ditties with her. As to society I suppose it is not of this present age in America. Even in England, by all accounts, they live a melancholy sort of routine, walking and riding of a morning, drinking and picking their teeth of afternoons, putting each

other to route at night, lounging at watering-places, and blowing their brains out at the regular seasons. It is hardly therefore to be presumed, that the inferior species of English, who compose the gentry of the United States, are gay<sup>er</sup>, more polished, or less suicidal, than their progenitors of the mother country.

The reigning president, unless fame belies him, is much addicted to gallantry, and not very fastidious in his loves. One of the vice-presidents was also, it is said, of similar propensities, and as indiscriminate in their indulgence. From such striking instances, is not a very general depravity inferrible? What an extraordinary race the medley of colours will produce in the course of a century! If polygamy were permitted, (and I wonder that in so free a country there should be any restraints,) a father of a family, happening to live to a green old age, might assemble children of all colours round his own table.

Of the men of America, the less you write the better. I shall have no objection to receive reports of that sex, whose peculiarities must constitute your chief and perhaps only entertainment. But of their ignorant and sordid masters, absorbed in trade and republicanism, who seem to know and desire no distinctions, but such as are to be earned with the sweat of their brows, I desire to hear as little as possible. For I never could subscribe to a sentiment of your favourite Dryden, that

Prodigious actions may as well be done  
By weaver's issue, as by prince's son.



Whatever statistical details you may think proper to communicate, and whatever natural anomalies, I consent to brood over, for the benefit of human nature and zoölogy. But spare me, I beseech you, spare me, my worthy instructor, long stories of republican bipeds and commercial usages.

\* \* \* \* \*

I have been in Paris ever since you left us, without one summons to Liège ; and I do not think I should depart without at least three. *Porriget hora*. During part of the time, the emperor was gone to the wars ; and we endeavoured to amuse ourselves as well as we could in his good city, during his august absence. Since his return, there has been nothing but rejoicing and festivity. Half a dozen crowned heads are now within our walls, each one holding a separate and splendid court, so as to render it ample employment for any one day, to pay our respects to all their majesties. The garden of the Thuilleries, and wood of Boulogne, are thronged with beauty, elegance, and fashion. Frescati, the opera, and all the theatres, overflow every night. Masquerades, public parades, and every imaginable refinement of spectacle and amusement, are kept up in a perpetual round. But his I. and R. M. leaves us soon, it is said, for another campaign ; when, of course, much of this splendour will subside. Is it not a singular fact, that Charlemagne, Charles V. of Spain, and Napoléon, resemble each other, in being always on the wing, for a journey or a war ?

\* \* \* \* \*

I am interrupted—Good God . . . have only  
time to add farewell ; a long, perhaps an eternal fare-  
well . . . my beloved friend and guide . . .  
What I have written is . . . Think not . . .  
I beseech you . . .

## LETTER II.

PHARAMOND TO INCHIQUIN.

Dated at Liège.

[The preceding letter was enclosed in this—E.]

POOR Charlemont!—The enclosed letter was forwarded to me open, from the prefecture of \* \* \*, with some strictures

\* \* \* \* \*

I have also received, by a private hand, a communication on the subject from O., with all the particulars. It seems, that on intelligence of an apprehended descent near Cherbourg, he was forced to volunteer to the conscription, without even drawing lots. The day after his attachment to a company, he was permitted to go to his lodgings, under a serjeant's guard, and in his regimentals, to secure his little effects; by which he had an opportunity to bid adieu to O. and the rest. The tear glistened in his eye, and farewell faltered on his tongue. But the drum summoned him away; and, inspired with the sound, after desiring his unalterable affection to be presented to you and me, he flew to his comrades at the gate, and marched away with them to his quarters.

The feelings with which this amiable youth appears to have been overcome at the moment of his arrest, and indeed I will confess the dismay with which I first heard of his being torn from us, led me into a train of reflection on that prodigious engine of state, the military conscription, which, I am happy to say, has terminated in the removal of all my uneasiness, and my entire reconciliation to that most useful and indispensable measure of state necessity. Mankind are prone to immediate impressions, without lifting up their contemplation to results ; and they suffer momentary actual privations to counterpoise distant permanent advantages. But what can be more contradictory to the first principles of a body politic, than that one of its members, a muscle or a fibre, should refuse its office in any way the whole body may command it ? The conscription is unpopular, because the operations of superior upon inferior minds are always incomprehensible and ill received. But it is not a measure of to-day ; nor is it an offspring of the revolution, fertile as that crisis was in hardy and powerful creations. “ I have seen, in my youth,” says one of the most unimpeachable of French historical writers,\* these forced recruits led off in chains like malefactors.” It is nothing more than the impressment of the English, without which their ablest statesman openly declared, in parliament, that it was

\* J'ai vu dans mon enfance ces recrues forcées conduites à la chaîne comme des malfaiteurs.—*Duclos, Mem. Sec. vol. 1. p. 9.*



impossible to equip a fleet in time.\* It is the militia of the Roman republic, the military system of all great nations, advanced to a degree of incredible perfection, by the mighty master, who now, from the throne of the Bourbons, wields the sceptre of Europe. If you can procure a copy of Polybius in America, I beg you to read the fragment of the seventh book, which has been handed down to us: where you will see that the Roman plan was severer and less certain than the French. Every citizen, before he attained to forty-six years of age, was compelled to serve ten years in the cavalry, or sixteen on foot. In times of danger, and we know how often the temple of Janus was shut, the period of service was protracted to twenty years. No citizen could aspire to the civil magistracy till he had served ten campaigns. Once a year the whole country was assembled for consular inspection. No excuses were accepted for non-attendance. No pretext of accident or illness; nothing less than absolute, unquestionable impracticability, was listened to. Every individual was sworn; and when the selections were made, a most rigid discipline went into immediate operation. The severest corporal punishments, bastinado and decimation, were inflicted for offences. No hospital for invalids, no half pay, no pensions

\* I am myself clearly convinced, and I believe every man who knows any thing of the English navy will acknowledge, that without impressing, it is impossible to equip a respectable fleet within the time in which armaments are usually wanted.—*Lord Chatham's Speech on the Relations with Spain, 2d November, 1770.*

awaited the wounded and worn out ; but barren honours, short-lived ovations, and allotments of lands in foreign conquests. Should then the French complain of their service ? Is there any thing in the conscription so rigorous, so lasting, so ungrateful ?

But if by comparison with the similar regulations of ancient and of modern powers, we see reasons for admiring the conscription, what must be our sentiments of admiration and gratitude, when we behold its effects ! If your countryman, the boding Burke, could see in France, before the revolution, so much to awe and command his transcendant imagination,\*

\* Indeed when I consider the face of the kingdom of France ; the multitude and opulence of her cities ; the useful magnificence of her spacious high roads and bridges ; the opportunity of her artificial canals and navigations opening the conveniences of maritime communication through a solid continent of so immense an extent ; when I turn my eyes to the stupendous works of her ports and harbours, and to her whole naval apparatus, whether for war or trade ; when I bring before my view the number of her fortifications, constructed with so bold and masterly a skill, and made and maintained at so prodigious a charge, presenting an armed front and impenetrable barrier to her enemies on every side ; when I recollect how very small a part of that extensive region is without cultivation, and to what complete perfection the culture of many of the best productions of the earth have been brought in France ; when I reflect on the excellence of her manufactures and fabrics, second to none but ours, and in some particulars not second ; when I contemplate the grand foundations of charity, public and private ; when I survey the state of all the arts that beautify and polish life ; when I reckon the men she has bred for extending her fame in war, her able statesmen, the multitude of her profound lawyers and theologians, her philosophers, her critics, her historians



what would have been his reflections, had he lived to see those harvests from the ashes of desolation he foresaw—those astonishing internal improvements and blessings, which, no less than his unparalleled victories, are the glories of that incomparable being, to whose guidance the destinies of the French empire have since been committed by an omniscient Providence—under whose rapid genius the conscription works like the elements at the nod of cloud-compelling Jove—and the lightning of his counsel has executed its commission, ere the thunder of his command can report its progress.

Who are those Frenchmen that hope to resuscitate the decayed and withered trunk of the house of Bourbon whose few remaining branches are now scattered before the winds? Units among the millions that have consigned that worn out stock to obscurity, whose reliance is in the aid of the deadly, prescriptive, inveterate foes, both of the Bourbons and of France—the English nation. What are the motives of English hostility to the new French dynasty? Their instinctive hatred of France, sharpened by the dire spirit of impotent revenge, mixed up with the gall of defeat and disaster. Do they pretend to be fighting the battles of the house of Bourbon? They, who have grown up in hatred and abhorrence against that family; they, who since their own Harry V. overran the north of France, since their own Charles II.

and antiquaries, her poets and her orators, sacred and profane, I behold in all this something which awes and commands the imagination, &c.—*Burke's Reflections on the Revolution in France*, p. 177.

was the stipendiary, and their own William III. the personal antagonist of Louis XIV. have waged one continued current of hostilities, sometimes breaking out in solemn war, and at others no less active in diplomatic stratagem, against the well being, the very existence of the French nation. Let us not be deceived by a subjugation of natural hate and a pretence of alliance, so monstrous, unreal, and unnatural. It is not now eight years since one of the ablest and most liberal of English statesmen, distinguished among his countrymen for his want of British antipathy toward the French, delivered, in the face of the nation, a celebrated speech, in which this passage occurs: "As an Englishman, and actuated by English feelings, I surely cannot wish for the restoration of the house of Bourbon to the throne of France. I hope that I am not a man to bear heavily on any unfortunate family. I feel for their situation; I respect their distresses: but as a friend of England, I cannot wish for their restoration to the power which they abused. It was not to be expected that the French, when once engaged in foreign wars, should not endeavour to spread destruction around them, and to form plans of aggrandizement and plunder on every side. Men bred in the school of the house of Bourbon could not be expected to act otherwise. They could not have lived so long under their ancient masters, without imbibing the restless ambition, the perfidy, and the insatiable spirit of that race. They have imitated the practice of their great prototype; and through their whole career of mischief and crimes, have done no more than servilely trace the

steps of their own Louis XIV. If they have overrun countries and ravaged them, they have done it upon Bourbon principles; if they have ruined and dethroned sovereigns, it is entirely after the Bourbon manner; if they have even fraternized with the people of foreign countries, and pretended to make their cause their own, they have only faithfully followed the Bourbon example. The whole history of the last century is little more than an account of the wars, and the calamities arising from the restless ambition, the intrigues, and the perfidy of the house of Bourbon.”\*

This is the testimony of an honest enemy, of a great English statesman, who has since been prime minister of Great Britain, and who is now no more.

Let us not, therefore, deceive ourselves, nor mistake the day, or the instrument of retribution. Let not our reverence for the pageants, before which we have been accustomed to bow the knee, be startled at the amazing fact in the history of our times, that the hereditary crowns of Europe are filled with foolish heads, and that the only one on which wisdom and valour, the legitimate attributes of royalty, now shed their influence, was raised from the dust on the point of a triumphant sabre. Let all Frenchmen remember the treaty of Pilnitz, and let not their enemies repine under the reaction of that accursed league.

When from embarrassment and bankruptcy we

\* Mr. Fox. Speech delivered 3d February, 1800, on a motion for an address to the throne, approving of the answers returned to the communications from France, relative to a negotiation for peace.



perceive the finances of France restored to competency and system, and an annual disbursement of a million millions provided for without extraordinary imposts ; when we consider that poor, and poor rates are pressures no longer existing ; that much more land is cultivated, and divided among smaller proprietors, than before the year 1789 ; that corn and wine, and all the great staples of subsistence, are abundant and cheap ; that the interest of money is reduced by the influx attendant on security from 10 and 12 to 3 and 4 *per cent.* ; when we behold public credit in full vigour and reputation ; national schools organized in every department ; obsolete laws rejected or modified, and modern provisions ingrafted into one great and comprehensive code ; learning munificently endowed ; the sciences fostered and flourishing ; every station filled with appropriate and commanding talents ; when we survey the fertile fields where marshes were drained and mountains levelled ; highways and canals, at the public charge, without individual exaction, connecting distant provinces ; when we contemplate the modern metropolis of the world, adorned with the master works of all ages, and resplendent with the most elegant and enlightened society of the present ; and when we reflect that all this is the performance of a few years and of one man, can we withhold our homage from that man, deny his right to a throne, or rebel against the instrument with which he raised this scene ! From the obscurity and prostration of a political chaos, under the auspices of Napoléon and the conscription, the French nation, realizing as it were in an instant of time, the visions of ages, has become an

immense empire, tranquil within, terrible abroad; new kingdoms have risen into being; christianity returns to her pillaged sanctuaries; and even Jerusalem raises her bowed head from the earth; the hardy sciences, chemistry, mineralogy, mathematics and astronomy, shoot up from a soil moistened with blood and manured with bones, to spread their golden fruitage over desolate regions; while poetry, painting, sculpture and music, wanton under their shade, and encourage their expansion.

\* \* \* \* \*

Next to these primary objects, while you remain on those shores, where pestilence and trade contend the fate of a new empire, endeavour to penetrate, if possible, the spirit and policy of that unaccountable union of disjointed sovereignties, which seems so often to hang on the brink of a rupture, and yet continues integral. I never could be satisfied with your views of that country, which perhaps may change on this visit. The spirit of foreign traffic, which lighted the flames of the last wars in Europe, and has for sixteen years fed them with fresh fuel, predominates to a fatal degree in the United States of America. This appanage of their mother country, this huckster's heritage, will be a curse and not a blessing to them. With the vast concatenation of lakes and rivers, which bounds, connects, fertilizes, and fortifies their western frontier, why should they tempt the troubled waters of the Atlantic?

At the close of their revolution, they were a prudent

\* Nearly half a page is erased here.

and a warlike—a characterized people. But have they not become ignoble and rapacious, tame to foreign insult and spoliation, and intractable to legitimate authority? As commerce is their national bond of union, is not knavery their predominant national characteristic? That trade, which seems to be their sole pursuit, unless disciplined, within due bounds, will lead from base submission to bloody hostilities and inevitable destruction.

It has long been a favourite opinion with several distinguished men here, and particularly with Cardinal Maury, that it would not be impossible to substitute the Catholic religion for the deplorable deluge of creeds that has flowed upon them with what they call toleration; and the French language for the German, Irish, English, and other dialects that prevail. French is now the most general language of the civilized nations of the world. The English colonies are the only parts of the globe, in which it is probable the English tongue will be preserved: and as it would contribute greatly to the facilities of international intercourse, that at least the civilized portions of the earth should speak the same language, I cannot consider it an unreasonable requisition of the Americans to adopt French as their vernacular. Do you believe the opposition to this change would be insurmountable? Their neighbours of Canada and Louisiana have already this advantage, which the inhabitants of the states might easily acquire. I wished to have conversed with you on this subject, and some others of a similar kind; but my indisposition and your short stay in Liège, deprived me of the opportunity.



Not only the language and the church, but the state and population being composed of such heterogeneous and militant materials, it is absurd to suppose the continuation, for any considerable period, of such a nation, especially when feebly held together by a nerveless government. "Nothing," wrote Aristotle two thousand years ago, and all subsequent experience has made an axiom of what was at first but an opinion—"Nothing is more unfriendly to public tranquillity than dissimilitude of character in the citizens. A heterogeneous assemblage of mixed tribes cannot speedily coalesce into a nation; and communities which have grown populous by sudden accessions are commonly torn by sedition." This, when applied to the American states, is prophecy, in the full train of verification.

The destructive fevers too, that prevail, are no less fatal than faction. I have always thought with the Abbé Raynal, that the population will never exceed ten millions. But of all these things, and many others, you will give us the results of your immediate observation; and, as you know, for the best possible reason, I most anxiously desire you may find cause to assure us of our error. But remember what reliance rests on your assurances, and be cautious accordingly. Almost as you advise we will act. And I trust you duly appreciate the importance of your recommendation, and the momentous consequences to which it may lead.

Adieu. You are never forgotten in our prayers. Write daily, and write at large. Never mind opportunities. If a package comes together, so much the

better. This letter should have been longer and better connected, if I held a pen with less difficulty. Your *best* friends are all well, with their eyes fixed on you. May God preserve and prosper you. *Cras ingens iterabimus.*

### LETTER III.

CLANRICKARD TO INCHIQUIN.

Dated at London.

Dear Brother,

WE received a few days ago, by an accidental conveyance through Holland, your letter from Liège, announcing your intended departure for America, whither I now address myself, as I take it for granted you must have arrived before this time. Your sister received the intelligence with considerable uneasiness, as you know she always had a dread of the climate in that unwholesome country. I regretted it for that, and for other reasons, which I will take this occasion to impart in the most unreserved manner; as I am sure, however we may differ in opinion, we can exchange sentiments without offence. It was your misfortune, at least I think so, to have been brought up at St. Omer's, where you imbibed prepossessions uncongenial with the habits and course of life, to which from your birth and fortune you were destined. You will do me the justice to admit that I never did approve of your attachment to the jesuits, and to a single life. Pardon my frankness; but it is

time I should be explicit. Had you never left Ireland until your ideas received a permanent cast, I am now fully persuaded that we should both have avoided those rocks, on which your fortunes were dashed to pieces, and from which mine had so narrow an escape. Be that however as it may, the question at present is not to remedy the past, but from its lessons to learn to provide for the future. It has always been matter of poignant regret with your family, that, whatever were your persecutions, you should seek refuge among the natural, and at this time the declared and cruel enemies of your country; among a people soiled with every crime as a nation, and of the utmost depravity as individuals. Mr. Burke's prophecies have been so dreadfully realized, and at the same time it has pleased an allwise Providence to vouchsafe such incredible success to their inhuman designs, that it truly may be said that sacrilege, massacre and perfidy, pile up "the sombre pyramids of their renown." All the iniquities in history are transcended by the vices and degradation of the modern French; not in their revolutionary excesses, which were popular ebullitions, capable, perhaps, of some extenuation, and of which I own that in common with many others, who are now smarting under their effects, I caught the sanguinary contagion. But their disregard of every religious and moral obligation, their abject submission to the most remorseless despot, at whose footstool an enslaved people ever crouched, above all, their insidious and barbarian persecution of Great Britain, a magnanimous and invulnerable foe, must render their



character so hateful in the eyes of all civilized mankind, that I hold it one of a Briton's most sacred duties to loathe a Frenchman; and I cannot reflect without shame and horror, that any person so near and dear to me as you are, by the ties of blood, connection and friendship, should be a willing participator of their dangers and depravity. This is strong language; but you must bear with me. What security have you, my dear Inchiquin, that the monsters, who compose the police, may not at any moment tear you from your bed, and plunge you in a dungeon, or transport you to some remote and destructive latitude? Depend upon it, a foreigner must always be a mark of suspicion. I cannot at this distance think, without an involuntary shudder, of the Temple, the Wood of Vincennes, and the many other places appropriated to human immolation. How can you be certain that the next conscription, breaking through any immunities in which you may imagine yourself entrenched, may not drag you in chains like a malefactor to the frontier, and expose you to an ignominious death? for such it certainly would be to fall in the cause of France. These are portentous, and you may think idle bodings. But I urge them with the more zeal, because, while you resided on the continent, I feared to expose you by venturing an appeal, which, if discovered, (and the French post-offices have no regard for the sanctity of a private correspondence) might have not only defeated its own purpose, but betrayed you at once into the power of the police. Does not your late act indeed attest the probability of the results I depre-

cate? Why else have you left France, where at least you might enjoy those social recreations to which you are accustomed, to wander in the wilds of America, where you must relinquish every such enjoyment? Your letter is silent respecting the motives for your voyage, which has set us adrift on an ocean of anxious conjectures. I presume it is political; for though your resources must be narrow, I do not suppose you can have launched into any mercantile speculations, with a view to retrieving them. But why have you gone at all? My last advices, if they ever reached you, gave you reason to expect that, upon showing a proper contrition, government may hereafter permit you to return to this, the only remaining asylum of tranquillity and happiness. It is now conceded, that you were not guilty of the crimes charged against you; and though it is too late to retrieve the ruin in which we were all involved, a disposition is entertained to forgive transgressions that flowed rather from youth and enthusiasm, than the judgment. But the first, and an indispensable step, is the abandonment of the French and their dominions. Nor will your voyage to the American states be an acceptable proceeding, unless, as I sometimes flatter myself, it should appear that in consideration of the difficulties attending a direct transit, you have gone there only preparatory to your return to England.

In the meanwhile we have happier tidings to communicate. I do not, you observe, date, as heretofore, from Killmallock. Since my last, every restraint has been removed from our persons, and I



have succeeded, through the influence of Lord Moira, in obtaining a place in the Customs, which yields about 100*l.* a year : a miserable pittance, to be sure, compared with the affluence we fell from, but still a great amelioration of our condition for the last five years. Upon receiving the appointment, I repaired immediately to London, without even taking Dublin in my way, and entered with alacrity upon the duties of a place, which formerly I should have considered with much contempt. It requires, indeed, my most assiduous attention ; and when I reflect on what I was born to, all the philosophy I have learned is requisite to enable me to dwell with composure on a reverse imposed upon me and my innocent family by an accusation so wicked and unjust. As long as we were under any sort of confinement, a principle of resistance suppressed the emotions of despair. But now that there is no longer any pressure to create such a reaction, the firstlings of misfortune prove extremely bitter. We are, however, tranquil, at least, if not contented. I have taken and furnished, in the homeliest style, a small house in Shugg Lane, where your sister has lately lain in with our fifth daughter, two of whom (I may almost thank God !) have been removed from this world of mourning. The expense of living is enormous, especially to us, who have all our economy to learn ; and no one, who has not been in a similar situation, can conceive the infinite petty impositions and exactions of which we are the prey. The air of London, or perhaps it is of this confined part of it, does not agree with Jane. But she bears the inconveniences

and privations, to which we must submit, with a serenity and fortitude, that administer to me perpetual consolation. With such an example, whatever I may feel, I should be ashamed to complain. During the principal part of the day, I am necessarily from home. We see no company whatever, and live in the utmost privacy and retirement. I have no books ; but there is a library in the neighbourhood, where I may be furnished if I will. What leisure hours I have, particularly the evening, I employ in educating my children ; in which task, when she is not indisposed, their mother is my assistant.

As if to reconcile us to our lot by proving how much worse it might be, we have been already visited with afflictions superadded to its ordinary and unavoidable hardships. Soon after we were settled in this house, a fire broke out one night in an adjoining street, to which I ran in order to assist in putting it out, while Jane and the children mounted up into the garret to have a better view of the danger. The parlour and chamber being thus deserted, some of those harpies who are always on the alert in this city to take advantage of confusion, found means to strip our ill-fated habitation of every article of furniture. Not a piece was left ; and we were put to the expense, which we could but ill bear, of buying an entire new stock, or rather I should say another stock ; for, far from being new, it was procured at second hand, at a sale of the goods of some companion in distress, which were brought to the hammer by an execution. This accident caused us a great deal of vexation and trouble ; and we had hardly repaired its

ravages by pledging my unpaid salary for payment of the debts thus contracted, when another inroad was as unexpectedly made on our peace, which threatened much more serious consequences. I was walking along the wharves in a dress, as it should seem, too indicative of my poverty, when a press-gang seized on me, and, in spite of my resistance, remonstrances and entreaties, hurried me on board a guard ship, where I lay for two days in momentary expectation of being taken before the mast of a man of war. My deliverance was owing to the resolution and conduct of that incomparable woman, whom in all my trials I have found a tutelary angel; and whom it is the keenest of my pangs to think I have reduced to indigence and wretchedness. She locked up our house, and with her daughters hanging on her arms, flew to the admiralty, where, having made her way through the contumely of underlings and the repulses of their lords, she never ceased her suit till an order was granted for my release. Even this had nearly come too late; for it was with no small difficulty I satisfied the officers of the custom-house, that my absence was accidental, and not owing to some irregularity, which ought to deprive me of my place.

But I shall tire you with these sorry details; which, melancholy as they are, I cannot but think present an existence preferable to the vagabond career you follow. A few months will inure us to lowliness, and clothe our humble fire-side with all the ineffable charms of home. If you will but bring the large accession of relief which your society

would afford, I fondly persuade myself we could forget the abundance in which we once flourished, make a merit of adversity, and live on the hope of better things.

When, as is sometimes the case of a Sunday, I take a short leave of that gloomy part of this vast metropolis in which we reside, and wander through the magnificent squares and parks of the west, thronged with gay equipages and smiling multitudes, my breast swells with admiration at the unequalled prosperity of Great Britain, whose inhabitants, reposing under the shield of the mistress of the world, can be thus secure and happy, while hosts of enemies in vain environ and beset them. At such a moment I can chide my selfish misery, and almost wish I had not been born an Irishman and bred a catholic. How different is the scene that must strike your observation among the demi-savages of America; where a weak and ignorant government is idly engaged in framing laws for an uncivilized and heterogeneous population. After all, the lion is the noblest beast. Let France and Russia, with their tributary potentates, conspire against him, and the American eaglet too show his impotent talons; the lion shakes his imperial mane in dauntless defiance of them all. The American federation, I suppose, cannot maintain itself much longer. According to the best judgment I can form of the prospects of that distracted country, the crisis is not very distant, when it will implore once more the protection of a parent state, which it has ever studied to outrage. Notwithstanding all the injuries that have been re-



ceived from those despicable freebooters by this magnanimous nation, I believe the cup of reconciliation is not yet exhausted. But let them beware the embrace of France. After seeing so many allies hugged to death by that perfidious power, they deserve their doom if they accept the kiss of corruption.

Good night. It is now past twelve o'clock, and I have been kept from my bed to so unusual an hour by the gratification I feel in pouring forth my feelings to you. If you will not come and live with us in England, I am afraid we must go and die with you in America.

## LETTER IV.

FROM INCHQUIN TO PHARAMOND.

Dated at Washington.

WHILE I was at Baltimore, the accidental circumstance of our living in the same hotel made me acquainted with a young Greek merchant, who has since become my companion here, where we share an uncomfortable chamber together. As he is to be your correspondent, on this occasion, and perhaps oftener, it is proper you should be generally informed that he is a native of Athens, who received a mercantile education in the English factory at Smyrna. Having finished his apprenticeship last year, in a spirit of enterprise not usual in a modern Greek, he resolved on accompanying a commercial adventure to this country ; where he arrived a few weeks since with an investment, which good luck has doubled in profit. His amiable disposition, and the ideas naturally excited by the presence of an Athenian, together with such scanty intelligence as is to be gleaned from his conversation, respecting his country and language, both so idolatrously venerable in my eyes, have attached me to his society. In consideration of the friendly relations existing between us, he sometimes reads to me his letters to a fellow



apprentice at Smyrna ; and to-day granted my request to take a copy of one, written, as they all are, in Italian, in which he communicates his ideas of this federal domain, or city, as it is called, *propter dignitatem*, I suppose, together with a narrative of the mishaps that lately befel him in the sylvan suburbs of Washington. As you will have received before this the letter\* containing my views of this singular capital, I shall present my fellow traveller's without comment ; observing only, that I have no other reason for believing his narrative to be fabulous, (as it is all very possible,) than that with the fancy and vivacity of an ancient Greek, and all a traveller's prejudices, he does not unite a Turk's deliberation ; but notwithstanding a total ignorance of mankind, and indeed of every thing, except half a dozen different languages that seem to be equally familiar to him, he commonly marches straight forward on his conclusions, and seizes them by storm, without the least regard to the ordinary process of getting to them by a course of reasoning. The truth is, that the foundations of this federal city have not been laid under prosperous auspices ; and it is the only part of the United States of America I have ever seen on the decline. Commenced on a huge, unwieldy scale, in a district occupied by slave-holders, without the habits of industry or the spring of commerce, instead of rising like Carthage, *instans operi, regnisque futuris*, the enormous joints fall asunder before they can be well knit together ; and the symptoms of premature dilapida-

\* This letter must have miscarried or been suppressed, as it does not appear.....E.

tion appear when the implements of construction are not yet taken away. A few scattered hamlets, many miles remote from each other, compose all that has arisen of the promised metropolis; while as many vast half-finished piles of building, at great distances apart, from commanding eminences, frown desolate and despairing on the dreary wastes that separate and environ them. Till lately the city was thickly wooded, and the American Numa might woo his Egeria in a hundred groves. But much of this ornament has been cut down for fuel, leaving, however, enough for shooting grounds to amuse those addicted to sports of the field. Not more than 7,000 souls are computed as the population, spread over an immense area. Of these probably one half are blacks; and most of the remainder members of congress, clerks, servants, innkeepers, or in some way appurtenant to the government, prepared to follow its fortunes, if necessary, to the banks of the Missouri, or the coast of California.

\* \* \* \* \*

\* Several lines are erased here.....E.

## FROM CARAVAN.

Dated at the federal city of Washington, in the district of Columbia, state of Maryland, one of the United States in North America.

IN my last, which I have not yet had an opportunity of sending, I discussed the merits of the American government; a subject new to me, and upon which, therefore, my reflections may not be conclusive: though I must say, the more I see and think, the fuller is my conviction, that this government, called republican, is not as popular as all governments ought to be; and instead of being managed by the people, is too subservient to various contradictory interests. The Turkish constitution, under which happy and glorious empire we have the inestimable good fortune to live, is certainly much more simple and popular. Our gengicheris, the militia, as they are called here, or great body of the people, immediately, and without any intervention, choose, declare, and instal a sultan, or president, as the chief magistrate is styled in this country; who, as he thus proceeds directly from the people, is directly responsible to them; and whenever he misbehaves, or they are dissatisfied, is by them directly removed, to make room for another object of their immediate creation and image. It appears to me to be absurd to talk of representing the people, when

in fact the representative, improperly so styled, is chosen not by the people, but by a small number of electors, who are themselves variously appointed, many of them not by the people, but by other electors, who again do not, in all instances, emanate directly from the community at large, and who, for the most part, never saw, and never may see, the object of their selection. The Turkish constitution is undoubtedly the lineal descendant and most precious relic of the ancient Grecian republic, wherein the mass of the people act in mass. A leader is called to his post by acclamation; and what is the difference whether the instrument of his removal be an oyster shell, or a bow-string? Such at least is my opinion, which, as it is considerably enlarged upon in my last, I will not resume at full here, but submit to your judgment.

Since I wrote that letter, many strange and truly American adventures have befallen me, which furnish a fruitful subject for this, written, I am sorry to say, in a sick chamber, to which my disasters in this inhospitable country have confined me.

For several days after my arrival here, I did not know I was in the city of Washington, the capital of America, which fact I have now, however, ascertained beyond a doubt; though, had I taken no other evidence than that of my senses, I might still be incredulous. This federal city is of great dimensions; ten English miles square. But as it is the head of the wildest and most immense territories any where united under one empire, where every thing affects to be representative, unlike Smyrna or Con-



stantinople, or any other city I ever saw or heard of, Washington is not built compact or in streets, but, as an image of the federal dominion, lies scattered over a wilderness, yet in a great measure unreclaimed from a state of nature. The parks and pleasure grounds, attached to the mansions of the principal officers of government, are so extensive, that though I have been very industrious, I have not yet been able to see much of the town; detached portions of which, I understand, are situated a few miles off, in different directions from where I lodge. Within sight of my window, there is a large castle, with a flag flying from the top, in which two hundred congress-men, as they are called, are confined, like muedhdkins in the minaret of a mosque, preaching day and night for the salvation of the people. Attached to the president's palace, as there is to the sultan's, there is a garden stretching all the way to the water's edge. But I believe he has no harem, and but one wife; what his religion is, I have not yet discovered. Whatever I learn hereafter, I shall take care to let you know. At present, every thing appears to me to be on a great scale. The barber, who shaves me of a morning, comes on horseback with his razors; and the physician, whom I sent for in haste to examine my wounds, lives five miles from my lodgings.

But alas! at the thought of a physician my bones ache anew; and my heart sinks at the recollection of my miraculous escapes. As the story of my adventures will sufficiently exhibit this American Palmyra, I proceed to lay them before you, that you may de-



cide whether, as you promised, you will still have the courage to follow me to the new world.

Of a fine morning, three days ago, I sallied out for a ramble before breakfast, thinking, perhaps, to see something worthy of observation; and as adventures were my object, I left the highway, or avenue, as it is called, and struck into the moor, that composes a great part of the city. I had not walked a mile, when I heard a gun go off, and saw the smoke rising at a little distance. Not caring to encounter fire-arms in so wild a place, I was turning back, when I saw a dog hunting about among the bushes, and close after him a young man, who came running towards me, not to plunder, as I for an instant apprehended, but merely to inquire if I had seen a covey of quails flying that way. He had a powder-horn and shot-bag over his shoulders, a liquor-flask hanging on one side, and a pouch full of dead quails on the other, was altogether rather coarsely caparisoned, and seemed to be intent on his game. Just after he accosted me, an officer, in a rich habit and laced hat, but unarmed, came riding very fast over the heath, leading a horse ready saddled and bridled, and drawing up close to where we stood, pulled off his hat, and said to the hunter, "Sir, there are despatches just arrived." "When?" cried the hunter. "Within this half hour—by express—two sets,\* Sir." "Give me the horse, and take my gun,"

\* This accidental exposition, from a disinterested quarter, of a point that has been so unfortunately contested between the U. S. and G. B. must place the fact beyond all future controversy.

added the hunter hastily ; and disencumbering himself from his shooting accoutrements, he vaulted into the saddle of the led horse, and galloped out of sight in a minute. All amazed at this mysterious meeting, " Pray, Sir," said I respectfully to the officer, as he was gathering up the things the hunter had thrown off, " Who is that ?" " That is the envoy," answered the officer, with an air of dignity. " But who is the envoy ?" replied I, " What is an envoy ? That's not the president, is it ?" " The president," retorted the officer, with a sneer, " I believe not—that's an other guess sort of a person—that's the envoy extraordinary." " But why is he extraordinary ?" said I. " Why because," said he. " Because why ?" said I. " Why because he is the British ambassador, my master, and the king his master's servant, and I am his servant, and neither he nor I cares a d—n for the president, for the matter of that," said the officer, and mounting his beast, he trotted away whistling after the other.

And is it possible, thought I, that that young hunter is the British ambassador, the representative of the great merchant monarch, whose fleet forced the Dardanelles, and threatened to batter down Constantinople.

With this sort of mental ejaculations I amused myself, strolling along in a different direction from that I had followed at first, and not paying much attention to which way I went, till I came to a thicket, where I was roused from my reverie by the report of another gun, and looking about, I saw a rabbit, pursued by a couple of dogs in full cry. As I was

always fond of the chase, you know, and used often to amuse myself in this way on the hills near Ismir, I joined instinctively in the pursuit, shouted to encourage the dogs, and made the best exertions I could to keep up with them. The rabbit doubled, and made back for the cover. Just as she was escaping into the thicket, another shot whizzed by my head, and down dropped puss dead at my feet. Casting around for the person from whom it came, I presently descried a gentleman under a large tree, leaning on his fowling-piece, and calling to the dogs to come in. As I approached him, he accosted me in French, telling me that I ran very well ; to which I answered, also in French, that he shot very well. Being thus mutually introduced by a slight compliment, we entered into conversation about the dogs, the rabbits, the ground, the weather, and a variety of such indifferent subjects, which lasted, I suppose, for half an hour, when a carriage drove up on a road a few paces distant, into which the Frenchman got with his dogs and dead rabbit, and drove away.

By this time I began to think of my breakfast, and of returning. But on reconnoitering my position, perceived that I had lost all trace of the route. A mussulman knows he is safe till his hour comes ; but there may be situations in which it is no sin to feel uneasy. There was no time to pause in such a place, where I did not know but that the next thing I met might be a carnivorous Indian, with his tomahawk, riding post on a mammoth, and therefore, according to the best judgment I could form of my bearings, I took a fresh departure, walking on at a gait not



a little accelerated by an increasing appetite, and the dread of being lost or devoured in the federal city. It never occurred to me to follow the carriage, in which I might have found a conveyance or a pilot : but in the exigency of my affairs, I pursued a course as straight as the nature of the territory would admit, without any prospect, or prominent object, to serve as a beacon. After wandering a miserable time, and thinking over all those lamentable thoughts, which occur to one expecting to perish in an inhospitable land, when I began almost to despair, I came to a hovel inhabited by black slaves ; what is called a negro quarter. It was a wretched log house, thatched with straw, with neither window nor chimney. There was a mule at the door, making a meal off the roof ; a cat, three dogs, and a negro child, with no other covering than a ragged shirt, through which a dingy skin showed in many places. I asked the way to my lodgings ; but getting no answer beyond barking, purring and grinning, went into the house, where I was more fortunate. There was an old woman, smoking a pipe, not more than an inch long, a young one with a child in her arms, and a man, seated on the ground, round a smoke rather than a fire, eating cake made of Indian meal, and hominy, a preparation of Indian corn. Upon repeating my inquiry, as I entered, the man came to the door, and showed me which way I should go—the reverse of that I had been travelling for an hour and more.

Finding them plentifully supplied with provender, such as it was, and my appetite rising as my apprehensions subsided, I joined the sombre cir-



cle, and partook of a luncheon of the cake, with some hominy. It was now almost noon, and these poor people were taking their dinner. As I plyed them with a great many questions, which they answered as well as they could, in their turn they put some to me, and among others one that led to an important disclosure. "I guess massa belong to the French bassador," said the young woman, showing all her teeth. "What's that?" answered I. "Him that shoots rabbits;" and from a little more information on this subject, interlarded between mouthfuls of hominy, I was given fully to understand, that the hunter, whom I last met, who went away in a carriage freighted with rabbits, was no other than the plenipo of another mighty monarch, who amuses himself by field sports in the heart of the American capital. Nothing ought to surprise in this country, or one might be permitted to wonder at meeting two such personages scouring the forests for recreation. But I am surfeited with amazement; and therefore, after receiving very particular instructions from my black hosts how to proceed in order to find the shortest cut home, I gave them a fippenny bit, (a species of American coin,) and set forward once more, determined never again, whatever oddities I might meet, to try so early an excursion in a federal city.

I was to go through a copse that lay on my right, being several miles from my destination, and after clearing the wood, to follow a foot-path I should see. Into the wood I hastened; but had not gone a hundred yards, when I heard two shots in quick succession close to me. Nothing but riflemen and sharp

shooting in this country, thought I; and turning an angle of the track, I discovered a scene which I could not comprehend at first, but which was soon brought home to me in a terrible explanation. There were two men standing a few paces apart, facing each other; two more at a little distance loading pistols; and two others farther off, standing together. They all looked grave and anxious—not a word was said—but a presentiment of what their business was, chilled me with apprehension. In a few seconds, each one of those loading pistols went to those that stood opposed, and handed a pistol to each of them. They then placed them precisely to a certain spot, adjusted their postures so as to exhibit what, as I have since learned, is called the feather edge, and then withdrawing aside, one of the loaders asked, “Are you ready?” “Yes,” said the other two, advancing their pistols. “Fire when you please,” cried the loader. At the word, one of them discharged his piece, and the other receiving the ball in his body, fell to the ground, his pistol going off into the air with the convulsive distortion of his fall. Immediately all but the man who had perpetrated the deed ran up to him who was expiring, and I, springing over a fence against which I was leaning almost petrified, flew to join the assistance. He was weltering in the blood that streamed from his side, and had fainted before any body could approach him. The two, who had remained at a distance, without taking any active part, and who now appeared to be surgeons, with as much despatch as they could, uncovered his body, and endeavoured, by cer-

tain applications they had prepared, to stanch the blood. In a short time the wounded revived from his swoon, and was supported in the lap of one of the assistants. His antagonist now drawing nigh, shook hands with him with great emotion, hurried off, and disappeared. The wounded man was then laid on a blanket, and carried by the other three, with my help, to a close carriage, that was waiting near the place of action, into which he was put, the ghastliness of death on his countenance, and the whole party slowly drove away.

This was a duel—a barbarian method of settling trivial personal disputes, very prevalent in some parts of America, of which, as I am told, there have been several, and most of those fatal, this season, in this neighbourhood.

My feelings were harrowed to a most painful degree by this rencontre; and as soon as the carriage was out of sight, I resumed my path, with a heavier heart than I am in the habit of bearing. Frightful images haunted my fancy, and I startled at every bush that rustled. It was my fortune, however, on this eventful day, to have my gloomy sympathies dispelled by a spectacle of a very different kind.

After I left the wood, in which this melancholy affair happened, I walked some two or three miles, all the time in the purlieu of the federal city, without seeing habitation or human creature, when, from the top of a hill I was passing, my attention was attracted, and I was induced to abandon the road I was pursuing, together with all thoughts of immediately returning, by a tumultuous concourse of men,



horses and carriages, which I could discern on a distant plain. Glad of any opportunity of changing the grave for the gay, especially when my mind was so uncommonly dark, and wishing to see all that is to be seen in this ridiculous country, I turned aside from my path to follow the promise of so much novelty and speculation. After all I had seen so lately, I considered it no more than prudent to approach with circumspection, and not to commit myself till I could ascertain what was the purpose of a tumultuous assembly, from which clouds of dust, and a confused din, were issuing forth. My conjectures were various, and I should have remained undecided all day, if my curiosity had not got the better of my caution, and prompted me, at all events, to join the throng. It proved to be the hippodrome, an amusement to which the Americans are much addicted, and in which, as in almost every thing else, they vainly believe they excel. It is held in a large open field, no more like the Atmeidan, than Washington is like Constantinople. Persons of all descriptions, from the president and chief officers of state down to their negro slaves, were collected together, driving pell-mell about the course, shouting, betting, drinking, quarrelling and fighting. Booths and tents were erected, in some of which refreshments were offered for sale, and in others gambling tables were kept; and stages on which the judges of the course were mounted. You must not be astonished at hearing that a number of beautiful females were present, sitting exposed on the tops and boxes of carriages, and in other conspicuous seats. Every line of separation



is so entirely obliterated, that wherever there are men you may be sure to meet women, in this country; and for my own part, I have no doubt that the women in the end will ride uppermost. All was uproar. The tramping and neighing of horses, the din of bets, the jingle of glasses, and the dissonance of disputes, filled the air. At last the horses destined for the contest were led out. But such horses and such a contest! Instead of noble rampant animals, bearing their crests aloft, and pawing the ground, all pride, phrensy and ambition, a couple of miserable skeletons crawled tamely up to the goal; for in this perverse country, it seems, they reduce instead of pampering their cattle for a race, and for four and twenty hours beforehand, allow them nothing to eat. The riders were dressed in parti-coloured clothes, with spurs on their heels and whips in their hands, to excite the sorry beasts they rode. Of these such unintermitting and merciless application was made, that the battered brutes bled faster than they ran, and were scarcely able, much less willing, to move, when brought up for the second trial, after resting from the first. However, they were goaded on for one or two rounds, when one of them, overcome by debility and effort, fell down and died on the ground.

Almost as exhausted as the horses, and having a very long walk still before me, I threw myself into a hackney-coach to ride to my lodgings. We crept along, and it was almost dark before we got near the inn. Hundreds of other carriages, horsemen, foot-passengers, chaises, stages and carts crossed us, dust-

ed us, and delayed us, so that I thought I was doomed never to arrive. At last we began to climb the hill on which our inn stands, and I was felicitating myself on my escape from the day's disasters, when one of those hurricanes, to which Washington is subject, began to blow like an Arabian sirocco, whirling the dust in clouds about the road. I experienced many a gale at sea, but never such a land breeze as this. The horses could hardly stem it. The old coach creaked to the blast. The coachman lashed with all his might—but in vain—the tempest was irresistible; and we were blown, horses, hack and all, off the road, into a deep ditch at the side, where I lay till the horses were cut loose from the harness, and the door loosened from the hinges, as the only means of my extrication.

Before I was sufficiently recovered to help myself, or know what had happened, the negro had crawled away with his horses; and the first moment of partial recollection found me sitting on the hub of one of the wheels, that was lying apart from the carriage on the ground, stupified, skinned, with one eye closed up, bruised, mangled, dislocated, and more dead than alive. It began to be dark. At any time I should have been perplexed to find my way in this desert; but bewildered as my senses were, I got up and moved on, as well as my lameness, blindness and stupefaction would permit, not knowing whither. Night gained on me apace, with all those apprehensions which the stoutest heart might own in an American desert. I fancied I heard the growling of bears, the howling of wolves, and the hissing of rattle-

snakes. The melancholy muck-a-wiss, a bird that delights in the dusk, flickered about my head, a flight of bats flitted round my path, and a legion of moschetoes, a sort of tarantula, whose bite no music will cure, fastened on my face, hands and legs, raw as they were, and unprotected from their venom. After wandering an age of anxious minutes, groaning with my hurts, praying for some relief, and starting at the strange objects that perpetually danced in every possible shape of terror before my remaining eye, of a sudden I was roused from a momentary forgetfulness of all other fears by a shout bursting forth just beside me, as if a whole tribe of Mohawks were putting up their whoop of destruction. Rivetted to the spot, I never should have ventured to leave it, had I not gradually discovered that the cause of my immediate alarm was an innocent jack-ass, browsing close by, whose braying I had mistaken for an Indian war whoop. Reviving to something better than my former level of despondency, I determined to make this beast the instrument of my rescue. As I found he had a bridle on, though no saddle or panniers, I clambered on to his bare back, and jerking him into a jog, committed my fate to his superior knowledge of the city, suffering him to carry me which way he chose, and transported at even this change in my forlorn circumstances. The branches flapped me in the face; the briars and brushwood scratched my lacerated legs; but nevertheless I plodded on with my ass, trusting to his instinct for being brought to some human habitation. We had not travelled far, when, from the top of an eminence, I



saw a great light, towards which my ass seemed to direct his steps. Imagine my horror, as I approached, at hearing the most piercing shrieks and yells, proceeding from a multitude of voices, male and female. With all my might I endeavoured to check the ass, or make him change his direction, but to no purpose ; he redoubled his speed, pressing on to the fire, which now blazed full in view, exhibiting the most dreadful spectacle that can be fancied. In spite of all my efforts I was hurried close upon the flames, and should have been carried into the midst of the cannibals that were dancing around them, had I not, finding all contest with my ass unavailing, thrown myself off his back, as he galloped in full charge, and, at the expense of a few more bruises, fallen behind a bush, that served to conceal me. There I lay, surveying the awful scene before me. Good God! thought I, quivering more than the leaves with the evening breezes, am I on earth or in hell? A huge fire of brushwood was crackling on the ground, round which stood a number of negroes, clapping their hands, beating their breasts, and uttering the most barbarous shouts, while a female lay at their feet in convulsions, but unresisting, and apparently in momentary expectation of being roasted and devoured. If my limbs had been uninjured, I could not have moved from the spot, such was the terror that overcame me. The incantations grew worse ; men and women, dressed to be sure like the slaves in general of this country, and some of them with books in their hands, but in all other respects like ferocious and frantic savages, seemed to



vie with each other in contortions of the face, and fury of gesticulation. They writhed, bellowed, foamed at the mouth, hung over the wretch on the ground, and exhibited every sign of cannibals greedy for their prey. Just at the fatal moment, when they all huddled round the victim on the ground, and were about to begin their accursed meal, a flash of sharp lightning eclipsed their infernal light, followed by a peal of thunder that broke over their heads: and upon looking up, which I had not before ventured to do, I perceived a storm on the point of breaking loose. Never were the first streaks of a clear sky so welcome to the shipwrecked mariner, as was this tremendous storm to me, which soon came down in torrents of rain, with continued streams of lightning and peals of thunder; for it broke up the pandæmonium, and snatched me from the most dreadful destruction, as I had little hope of escaping being the next victim. As soon as the rain interrupted their orgies, the blacks ceased, though without any symptoms of haste or trepidation. The woman on the ground sprang on to her feet; and the whole hell, some on jack-asses and mules, others on horseback, and most of them on foot, marched off to the measure of a kind of dirge, which they all joined in singing. After the last sounds died away amid the pelt-ing of the shower and reverberations of the thunder, rolling from hill to hill around the amphitheatre that surrounds the city, I once more crept out, drenched with rain, but delighted; forgetting my injuries, blind and halt as I was, considering nothing but the dangers I had miraculously escaped, and how to fly as

far and as fast as possible, from this the most frightful purlieu in the whole city of Washington ; and taking a direction opposite to that in which the cannibals departed, hobbled along, till, to my inexpressible joy, I heard a dog bark. Presently a little glimmering light twinkled from no great distance, such a one as I thought I might approach without risk, and in a few minutes more I was welcomed into a decent log farm-house, where a family of a man and three women were seated round a table, eating mush, another preparation of Indian corn ; of which, after having the blood and dirt washed from my face, I was presented with a bowl. It was now late at night ; and I found I was further from my lodgings than I could possibly walk in my maimed condition, in the dark, and without a guide. When, therefore the man and his wife and their three boys, went to bed in one of the beds there were in the room, and the two young women in the other, the house consisting of but one apartment, I took the liberty to stretch my aching limbs upon the floor, where all my cares were forgotten in a sound sleep till morning. But when I awoke, and attempted to get up, my bruises were so stiff, that I could scarcely stand, much less walk a mile and a half to my lodgings. In this emergency, my host, who was going to our hotel, with a cart load of potatoes, generously gave me a ride on the top of them ; and shot me down at the inn door with the rest of his burthen. For three days I have not been out of my chamber. Blood-letting, fever, physic and aches, a cold room, and a hard bed, continually call to mind the perils of a ramble in

the city of Washington; and I sigh once more, believe me, Selim, for the cheerful crowds and fragrant environs, the beautiful day and beloved scenes of Smyrna.

## LETTER V.

FROM INCHIUIN TO PHARAMOND.

Dated at Washington.

THE whole world of Washington is concentrated in the capitol. In the absence of all other places of public resort and recreation, the galleries of Congress are attended by those who have no better pastime than political debates ; and, in common with the rest, I pay my daily attendance on this school of national oratory.

The apartments, in which the representatives of the American people hold their assemblies, are all under the same roof, and generally free of admission ; perfectly appropriate and magnificent ; and though the temple of republicanism, not unworthy to be

Monumenta regis  
Templaque Vestæ.

In no part of the world are there more noble edifices devoted to similar purposes ; and, compared to that of the American commons, St. Stephen's chapel, in particular, is a most contemptible chamber. The hall of the representatives is of spacious di-



mensions ; an oval, surrounded by twenty-four Corinthian pillars, and surmounted by a lofty, painted dome, through which the light is admitted by a hundred apertures. The galleries and lobbies, situated behind the pillars, are large and convenient, festooned with scarlet drapery, that serves to prevent too great a resonance of the voice, and at the same time to give a compactness and finish to the apartment. Over the grand entrance, there are emblematic bas-reliefs ; and, on the opposite side, a statue of liberty. The furniture, decorations and arrangement, are becoming and elegant ; and during a night session, when the hall is lighted by lamps, the whole effect is fine and imposing.

The senate chamber is in the other wing of the capitol, which is yet in quite an unfinished state, of a smaller size than the hall of the representatives, with a double arched dome ; and Ionic pillars, the drapery, hangings and carpets, and indeed the whole chamber finished in a superior style of splendour and brilliancy.

Under the senate chamber is the hall of justice, the ceiling of which is not unfancifully formed by the arches that support the former. The judges, in their robes of solemn black, are raised on seats of grave mahogany ; and below them is the bar, surrounded by a Doric colonnade, somewhat elevated above the bar, and behind that an arcade, still higher, so contrived as to afford auditors double rows of terrace seats, thrown in segments round the transverse arch, under which the judges sit.

The main body of the capitol has not been begun,

and all these halls are in the wings. The whole pile, when complete, will be enormous. The vestibules, stairways, and galleries of communication, are designed and executed with great magnificence; though at present they are disfigured by scaffolding and patchwork; and the three original orders of Grecian architecture are displayed in the three halls, with perfect chastness and uniformity.

As public speaking in all its branches, parliamentary, forensic, and of the pulpit, is exhibited in the capitol, and this is really the only public spectacle of Washington, I pass great part of my time there; and propose to give you some account of the state of oratory in this country, as contrasted with others, both ancient and modern, with a sketch of some of the orators, who are assembled, from various quarters, in this metropolis.

To begin with the pulpit: as there are very few, and those very small, places of public worship in the federal city, the representative hall, which, from its spaciousness and form, is well adapted to such a purpose, has been taken as the theatre for ecclesiastical discourses; and a scene, which wants no additional interest from its originality, since my residence here, has been rendered, by the presence of a celebrated preacher from New-York, peculiarly striking and memorable. Figure to yourself a magnificent apartment, with no one appearance of a church, crowded with an audience consisting of all descriptions of persons, of both sexes and colours, promiscuously seated and standing; the galleries, stairways and entrances thronged, and every avenue surfeited

with spectators. No choir, no preparatory service or solemnities, but a band of soldiers, with all "the pride, pomp, and circumstance of war," file in, marching to a martial air, sounded by drums and warlike instruments, and take their stations. Soon after the clergyman begins.†

\* \* \* \* \*

When I went into the court of justice yesterday, one side of the fine forensic colonnade was occupied by a party of ladies, who, after loitering some time in the gallery of the representatives, had sauntered into this hall, and were, with their attendants, sacrificing some impatient moments to the inscrutable mysteries of pleading. On the opposite side was a group of Indians, who are here on a visit to the president, (papa of the savages,) in their native costume, their straight black hair hanging in plaits down their tawny shoulders, with mockassins on their feet, rings in their ears and noses, and large plates of silver on their arms and breasts.

With silver flaming and barbaric gold.

In the center of the peristyle, stood a superannuated officer of the American revolution, who passes his few remaining winters in Washington, vainly petitioning congress for "that which should accompany old age;" his habit of the "olden time," edged with tarnished lace; his hair as white as snow; his face furrowed, but full of dignity, resting with one hand

† Here we regret to say several lines are scored out.....E.

on a cane, and with the other supporting himself against a column.

\* \* \* \* \*

Before this audience was the bench of reverend judges, listening with constrained patience to a ruby-faced spokesman ; who, with his hair in full powder, but without any robe, which, like charity, might have covered a multitude of improprieties, was chopping law-logic, in a voice so loud as to be almost lost in its own reverberations. This was the third day of his speech ; of which I heard nothing more than the peroration. But that was enough ; for though, as well as I could catch the subject, there was a pervading strength of argument, and some coruscations of rhetoric, his gestures were so vehement, countenance so angry, and his continual digressions so entirely extra *flammantia mœnia mundi*, that it was impossible to keep in view both the speaker and his cause ; and indeed before he concluded, I suffered all the torments of restlessness, and a jaded attention, bewildered with vain efforts to sit still and understand.

\* \* \* \* \*

But it is in the two houses of congress that we should look for the orators of America, selected as the members of those houses are, from all parts of the country, for their talents and eloquence. To a certain degree, an ability for good public speaking is very common in the United States. Natural fluency, characteristic fire, and a habit of public debating, are almost universal. But there have been, and there are individuals elsewhere, who, as their talents have been corroborated by a more complete education, and



matured under a less distracted attention, have attained probably to higher grades of distinction than any of the Americans.†

\*       \*       \*       \*       \*

There are others in congress, in whose orations the smell of the camp is more perceptible ; but none to be considered models of fine speaking. Indeed to adopt either the congress, or the forum at Washington, as types of the national oratory, would be doing injustice to the country ; for there are at the bar, and in the provincial assemblies of many of the states, or at least there were, when I formerly resided in America, men certainly superior to any whose exhibition is confined to the capitol.

\*       \*       \*       \*       \*

As language is the offspring of necessity, so eloquence is the child of the passions, born in the bosom of liberty, fostered by the love of glory. In the early stages of society, a man endowed with supple organs, a rich imagination, and an ardent soul, uniting a firm and rapid enunciation with striking gestures, and vehement intonations with pathetic accents, would surpass, sometimes in great strokes, and always in impression, an orator enlightened by study, and disciplined by rule. But the scene is changed, when society advances in civilization, when manners become refined, ideas enlarged, objects complicated ; when sagacity rather than truth prevails in debate ; when the arts and sciences, furnishing a multitude of objects of comparison, render an au-

† We again express our regret that nearly half a sheet is erased in this place, containing probably some personal strictures, not intended for the public eye.

dience more delicate in its sensations, and fastidious in its decisions; when it comes armed with doubt and criticism, rebels against conviction, is desirous of metaphorical scintillations, and weighs words before it weighs reasons. Eloquence, which was at first little more than the gift of announcing thoughts with animation, without much regard to their dress, becomes then devoted to their decoration. At such a time, in an age of refinement, when the facilities of printing render a whole nation one and the same audience, it is hazardous to give the reins to inspiration. Extemporary eloquence existed first in Greece, where it survived the fall of freedom and decay of taste; but its genius changed with its objects, and it fell to the lot of sophists and rhetoricians, who, wandering from place to place, offered to declaim a given time on any given subject; whose frivolous and insipid talent has reappeared in the improvisatoris of modern Italy.

Such sacrifices, such self-interment in retreat and study, to appear again after years of immolation, masters of themselves and rulers of the universe, as are related of Demosthenes and Cicero, certainly surpass the modern labours of preparation. "The famous orators of Greece and Rome," says Bolingbroke,\* "were the statesmen and ministers of those commonwealths. But eloquence must flow like a stream that is fed by an abundant spring; and not spout forth a little frothy water on some gaudy day, and remain dry the rest of the year."

\* Bolingb. Let. on the Spirit of Patriotism.

But the ancients, however intense their study or their excellence, were only forensic and political orators. That sublime species of moral eloquence, which is universal and everlasting, was first introduced by the evangelical law.\* Cicero defends a client; Demosthenes combats an adversary, or endeavours to light the expiring flame of patriotism in a degenerate nation. Their utmost efforts aim to excite the passions, and their best hopes are fixed on their agitation. But pulpit eloquence seeks its ends in sublimer regions, wins by subduing the movements of the soul, and secures the passions by their appeasement. It requires neither the cabals of faction, popular commotions, nor extraordinary crises. Its text is God and charity, always the same, always inexhaustible. In the bosom of peace, over the bier of the humblest citizen, its themes are more pathetic than the noblest political subjects; and no conjuncture of antiquity can parallel its ordinary occasions.

In most countries of modern Europe, such is the form of government, as to afford few, if any, opportunities for senatorial or popular eloquence; which is hardly known, except in Great Britain and the United States. The palm of pulpit and academic oratory, is due decidedly to France: Bourdaloue, Fléchier and Massillon, have no competitors; and the gratuitous harangues of Thomas are elaborated to a degree of elegance and fascination unequalled in their kind. To the English would be as decidedly due the pre-eminence in forensic and parliamentary

\* See Chateaubriand, *Génie du Christ.*



speaking, were it not for the Americans, who are their rivals in the latter, and greatly their superiors in the former species.

The English are excellent reasoners, chaste writers, and classical scholars, but seldom fine speakers. A natural talent for extemporaneous elocution does not seem to prevail among them, as it does among the Americans. When the form of their government is adverted to, their revolutions, factions, and popular tumults, and the great number of their writers, of the first impression, on every subject, both in poetry and prose, it is matter for wonder, that so few distinguished orators have appeared in England; and that such as have, were reserved for the present age of peace and prosperity. Their pulpit is learned, didactic, but phlegmatic, and never eloquent; their bar almost universally addicted, as Sir James Macintosh has observed, to a bad style, and ungraceful elocution; and in parliament a sober and deliberate course of reasoning seems to be preferred to any efforts of imagination, or blandishments of rhetoric. Till Chatham's ascendancy, there is not one entitled to the first rank for the powers of speech. Since his demise, the mantle of eloquence has been borne by more than in all their preceding history. But now again the death of Pitt and Fox is succeeded by another *interregnum*. Not but that there are several men in both houses of parliament, of respectable talents for public speaking. But there is no orator. There is no individual with the acknowledged pre-eminence of Demosthenes and Cicero among the ancients, or Chatham and Burke, or even Pitt and Fox



among themselves ; no one with the rank as a mere public speaker, considered apart from his merits as a statesman, which Ames once held, or which Mr. Randolph now occupies in America. The orators of England will probably very soon be reduced, unless new ones arise, to Chatham and Burke, and, perhaps, Sheridan. The few others who were eminent, were nothing better than adroit debaters ; and the great body of their public speakers, in parliament, at the bar, and from the pulpit, with great good sense, and extensive acquirements, are miserably deficient in all the properties of eloquence ; to whom an audience listens, by a sort of compulsion, compounding with a dry diction, an uncouth gesticulation, and a rough manner, for the acuteness and ability with which they commonly manage their matter. Chatham and Burke must be admired, while the English language endures. But Fox, though an animated and persuasive reasoner, was no orator : and his rival Pitt's greatest recommendation was the bare merit of propriety : *jus et norma loquendi*.

Does love of the land of my forefathers deceive me when I think that Ireland, manacled and chained as she is, has produced some of the finest orators of the age. It was in Ireland Burke and Sheridan lisped the first of those numbers, that were afterwards modulated on the greater but less harmonious sphere of England. It is in Ireland that Curran and Grattan shine. It is there that a constitutional mercantilism and frankness, beating against the shackles of domination, have struck out some of the finest flashes of an eloquence, sublime and pathetic, spon-

taneous, perhaps irregular, but exuberant, gorgeous, intense and irresistible.

I will not say the Americans have exhibited a Chatham or a Burke. I think their most excellent speakers want the finish of oratory. But the nation appears to me to enjoy a greater aptitude for public speaking, more generally diffused, and more frequently displayed in flights of bold, nervous, and sometimes beautiful eloquence, than any other whatever. In their public bodies, congress, the state assemblies, the bar of the several states, and their numerous political, and academic associations, there is a much greater number of agreeable speakers, than in the similar assemblies of Great Britain, with whom, from the identity of language and similarity in other respects, it seems most natural to compare them. There is no modern people, among whom the opportunities of oratory are so numerous ; or the incitements to oratorical excellence so strong. In such a republic as that of the American states, an orator may be a perpetual dictator, for reasons very different from those which produced the same effect in the ancient commonwealths. In them the populace were moved, through their ignorance ; here the people may be roused through their universal intelligence. A fertile and solid memory ; not that which retains words, but in which ideas are classed, as it were, in a great repository, waiting the orders of the judgment ; a rapid conception, which unites, while it conceives ideas ; an intrepid and hardy logic, which seizes analogies, without the process of comparison or deduction ; a courage irritated rather than abated

by interruptions and difficulties; a happy facility to feel, and yet to restrain the feelings, for passion, which sometimes obscures the intelligence, always fertilizes, when it does not disorder; a mind enlarged by study, fortified by meditation, habituated by writing to the concentration of thought, and rectitude of expression; consummated in any individual of this country, would place its destinies at his disposal.

## LETTER VI.

FROM INCHIUIN.

Dated at Washington.

THE inauguration of the new president took place yesterday, when I was prevented witnessing the ceremony by a cold, which confines me to my chamber. With this letter I have forwarded a newspaper, containing an account of what little ceremonial there was on the occasion, which I accompany with a sketch of the characters of the American presidents.

Of Washington what shall be said? Panegyric cannot be exhausted on his name. The sovereignty of his country was asserted by his energy, and secured by his moderation. His military successes were more solid than brilliant, brilliant as they were; and judgment, rather than enthusiasm, regulated his conduct in battle. In the midst of the inevitable disorders of camps, and the excesses inseparable from a civil war, humanity always found refuge in his tent. In the morning of triumph, and in the darkness of adversity, he was alike serene; at all times tranquil as wisdom, and simple as virtue. After the acknowledgment of American independence, when the unanimous suffrage of a free people called him to administer their



government, his administration, partaking of his character, was mild and firm at home, noble and prudent abroad. Born to opulence, he had nobly increased his patrimony, like the early heroes of Rome, by the labours of agriculture : and though an enemy to vain parade, he wished to environ the manners of republicanism with a becoming dignity. His well regulated mind repulsed every species of extravagance. No one of his fellow-citizens loved liberty more ardently ; but no one heard, with a stronger repugnance, the exaggerations of demagogues. In all his negotiations the heroic simplicity of the American president dealt, without vainglory or abasement, with the majesty of kings. His were not the fierce and imposing features which strike all minds ; but order and justice, truth, and above all, good sense, were his characteristics : good sense, a quality as rare as it is useful, and as useful in public stations as in private life. Genius elevates, boldness destroys ; good sense preserves and perfects. Genius is charged with the glory of empires ; but good sense alone can assure their repose and duration. When Washington saw his country raised, in great measure by his personal influence, from distraction and despondency, to an honourable rank among independent nations, actuated by neither fear nor ambition, but desirous of enjoying in private the tranquillity he so greatly contributed to affirm, he retired from the presidency, to live and die a private citizen, when he might have been monarch of the West. But though he relinquished the first place, the first name in America

continued and ever will be Washington. There are prodigious men, who appear at intervals, with the character of greatness and domination. An unknown, supernatural cause sends them forth, when required, to found, or repair the ruins of empires. In vain do such men keep aloof, or mix with the crowd; the hand of fortune raises them suddenly, and they are borne from obstacle over obstacle, from triumph through triumph, to the summit of authority. Inspiration animates their thoughts; an irresistible movement is given to their enterprises. The multitude looks for them in itself, but finds them not; and lifting up its eyes, they are beheld in a sphere resplendent with light and glory. No monarch on his throne was ever so great as Washington in his retirement. No founder of an empire had the same pretensions, looking around on the national power and prosperity he had created, to exclaim, *Hæ sunt meæ imagines, hæc nobilitas, non hereditate relicta, sed quæ ego plurimis laboribus et periculis quæsiui.\**

\* The ancients would have deified such an individual as Washington, and transmitted his name, thus rendered sacred, to the veneration of posterity. No political improvements or national institutions, no course of policy, no mere system, however excellent, can tend so much to make a nation happy and great, as the disinterested exertions of individuals, exalted by their superior talents and virtue. It ought to be one of the first objects of a republican people to enshrine the characters of those men, to whom their prosperity may be even in part ascribed, and with whose names their national character will be associated. Some of the ablest statesmen and historians have pronounced their judgments

The two succeeding presidents have also already passed away politically, each of them with claims much urged, and much contested, to applause. From a long residence in the United States, and an intimate observation of their principal men, manners and institutions, I hope I have collected the means for appreciating them justly, without imbibing the poison of their factions and personalities: And I shall endeavour to delineate them, as if they were no more, without bias or prejudice.

Périssé à jamais l'affreuse politique,  
Qui prétend sur les cœurs un pouvoir despotique.

The void left by Washington it was impossible to fill; and Mr. Adams, whose misfortune it was to succeed him, *proximus, sed longo intervallo*, never

for men in preference to measures. Sallust, a warm admirer of popular governments, and certainly enlisted on the popular side, inquiring into the causes of Roman greatness, thus expresses his opinion: *Mihi, multa agitant, constabat paucorum civium egregiam virtutem cuncta patravisse; eoque factum uti divitias paupertas, multitudinem paucitas superaret.* *Sal. de Cat. s. 54.* *Il ne s'est presque jamais, says Voltaire, rien fait de grand dans le monde que par le génie et la fermeté d'un seul homme, qui lutte contre les préjugés de la multitude.* *Es. sur les Mœurs.* And the late Mr. Fox expresses a similar sentiment in still stronger terms. "How vain," says he, "how idle, how presumptuous is the opinion, that laws can do every thing! And how weak and pernicious the maxim founded upon it, that measures, not men, are to be attended to." *Hist. of James II. Introd. p. 14.* So too the philosophi-



entered the mind in comparison with his predecessor. At the commencement of the revolution, Mr. Adams stood forth a zealous, resolute and useful patriot; and though his services were confined to the civil departments, they were nevertheless steady, well directed and important. Being afterwards vice-president under Washington, of acknowledged abilities and irreproachable reputation, having had the honour of representing his country in Europe on several momentous missions, and being an individual of preponderating influence in the States of New-England, the presidency devolved upon him after Washington's retirement, as it were, rather as a matter of routine and reward, than on account of his superior fitness for the situation. No man can be great, who is not greater than his fortune; nor does any weakness more deservedly incur contempt than the intoxication of success. Elated by his election, Mr. Adams lost the equanimity, which was, perhaps, the first requisite for his place. Wanting, besides, the personal weight that a president should possess, when the impulse that carried him into office subsided, as it soon did with the infatuation that followed, it became evident, that neither himself, his cabinet, nor the people, were under his government, and that his short-lived power was on the wane. A considerable section of his own party were his opponents; among whom the most conspicuous and influential was Gesing poet, dilating indeed the sentiment with a poet's license, exclaims,

Of forms of government let fools contest;  
That which is best administered is best.



neral Hamilton, a man of splendid and versatile talents, of a romantic temper and noble sense of honour, but imprudent, and hating and despising the president. On the other hand, his antagonists were managed by a leader of consummate skill, in whom the whole opposition reposed implicit confidence, and who was every way superior to Mr. Adams in the arts of popularity. He suffered moreover from comparisons with Washington. Of a grand and graceful person, reserved, august and commanding, the latter knew how to be gracious without relaxing his native dignity, and to maintain an elevated official rank without the guards or glare of royalty. But Mr. Adams had none of these advantages. His presence was neither graceful nor imposing; and his manners were sometimes abrupt and repulsive. Thus deficient in some of the qualifications for command, though he undoubtedly enjoyed many others, thwarted in his own party, and opposed by a skilful adversary, he proved unequal for the task, and was superseded on the expiration of the first term for which he was chosen. He had indeed to contend with no inconsiderable difficulties, and the tide of popular opinion was setting strong enough perhaps to have carried him off, without any demerits of his own.

But Mr. Adams can hardly be accounted a man of the first stamp. Integrity, industry, experience and extensive information, qualifications of the first impression for public places, he certainly possessed; and had he been content to move in a sphere for which he was fitted, elevated but not the most

elevated, he might have lived prosperously, and died with an enviable reputation. But seduced into regions where he was incapable of shining, he began to decline almost as soon as he trespassed on them. Towards the close of his period, when the manifestations of dissatisfaction began to be alarming, it was said he made unbecoming sacrifices to propitiate popularity, which served only to multiply his enemies, and hasten and confirm his fall. In the administration of governments there not unfrequently occurs a dilemma, where it is extremely perplexing to determine whether to advance or recede. But there probably never was an exigency of this sort, when a time-serving abandonment was not more hazardous than an independent perseverance in the unpopular measures.

In the relations of private life, Mr. Adams was always amiable and exemplary; affectionate in his family; steady and ingenuous in his friendships; punctilious in the observance of his engagements; of religious habits, and few, if any vices; incapable of intrigue, and deficient even in that address, which is often so necessary, and seldom amiss, in a person called to act a distinguished part. His love of country was ardent and high-toned. He had knowledge, but more of books than men. He had seen a great routine of public business; but his acquirements were not practical. Vanity was his predominant failing; and though his judgment was in general good, a sort of imbecility hung about it, like ivy round an oak, affecting all the measures of his administration.

As Madame de Sevigné says of one of her friends, his good and bad qualities were mixed up pell-mell together ; and these never could answer their design without more or less thwarting from the others.

Yet his administration was more unfortunate for himself and his party, than for his country : not so ill advised, as unsteadily executed, ending as much too low as it began too high. As his career was unsuccessful, his annals are obscured ; and indeed it may be doubted, whether his party, as such, will ever recover the defeat they sustained under his auspices. But he must always feel the consolation of having been governed by principles, the least worthy of which was nothing worse than ambition ; a fault, which one of the most celebrated ancient writers and politicians designates as *vitium propius virtuti*, the vice nearest to virtue. If, as has been thought, the aggrandizement of his own family was his favourite object, he at least associated their exaltation with that of his country ; and as a great poet has said,

When men aspire,  
'Tis but a spark too much of heavenly fire.

It is supposed Mr. Adams is relieving his leisure by composing his own memoirs ; a donation which all unfortunate statesmen, who survive their power, owe to themselves, and all such as are fortunate to their country.

The political demise of president Adams was succeeded by a crisis that threatened to prove fatal



to the American union; and which, though not strictly incidental to my present subject, I cannot omit, inasmuch as it tends to show the inconsiderable effects of an ill-regulated ambition, though exerted by an individual of rank and talents, upon the spirit and institutions of the American people. One of the two parties, who contested the presidency, gave their votes for Mr. Jefferson and Colonel Burr, as president and vice-president, but without designating which was intended for the one office, and which for the other. Burr was a man of unquestioned abilities, but unbounded ambition. Brave, insinuating, munificent and artful, fond of pleasure, but fonder of glory; accessible, affable and eloquent; like Rienzi and some other eminent demagogues, studious and laborious; calm in success, undismayed at reverses; poor, in debt, subtle, popular and intriguing. It was well known that his party did not intend him for the chief magistracy. But the confusion of suffrages placed that dazzling object within his reach; and, unable to resist the temptation, he tampered with the other party, in hopes of attaining it by their voices. Like most double dealers, he wanted resolution to go all lengths; and the intrigue failed, when, had he exercised the same influence that the Vatican and all elective monarchies have so often witnessed, in all probability he might have been raised to the chair. What effect such a result would have had on the federation, it is not now necessary to imagine. After a violent and doubtful conclave, Mr. Jefferson was elected president, and Colonel Burr,



though appointed vice-president, (which place he filled with unrivalled dignity and intelligence,) lost the countenance of his own party, without having ingratiated himself with the other; and at the expiration of his four years, notwithstanding many struggles, was abandoned by both parties. Thus stripped of his rank and emoluments, at a moment when his affairs were involved, and his lust of power unappeasable, *mala res, spes multo asperior*, and being exiled from his State in consequence of killing General Hamilton in a duel, he plunged at last into a conspiracy for invading the Spanish provinces, or severing the American States, or some other such impracticable project, which he was so infatuated as to imagine would raise him to an eminence, from whence he might look down on his reverses and enemies. Whatever this mysterious scheme was, it was so badly either planned or executed, as never to become sufficiently obnoxious to the law; and was traced, detected and crushed by president Jefferson with triumphant facility. Since this series of disasters, in which Burr has been implicated, many have supposed that he never could have possessed the vigorous understanding and character, generally attributed to him. But his conspicuousness was too long perceived, and too extensively, to be deceptive: and he is rather to be viewed as an instance of the degradation consequent upon misapplied talents. His country lost in him a citizen of masculine and aspiring spirit; of infinite address and excellent acquirements, who, had he succeeded, might

have been the American Cæsar ; but as he failed is hardly entitled to the infamous celebrity of Catiline.

Mr. Jefferson, to whom the reins were thus committed, was always a leader ; and in fact was largely instrumental in creating the party to which he belonged. Under a gradual accumulation of fresh points of controversy, he maintained this post with pre-eminent ability and ultimate success ; and never left it till he had accomplished the extremest trials of the politics to which his life was devoted. While out of place his opposition was incessant and pervading ; and when invested with power to exercise the principles he professed, his practice showed how much he was in earnest in his professions. He made his way to the executive magistracy through clouds of imputations and every sort of obstacle. When within reach of his grand object, when the beams of authority began already to play on his brows, he had nearly been dashed from it by the management of Burr and his adversaries. Yet he entered on his office with the utmost apparent serenity. While the axe of innovation thundered from his strokes, oblivion and conciliation were on his lips. His antagonists dwindled in number as they became more inveterate. His partisans increased in number and devotion ; and though the opposition loaded him with charges of the foulest dye, his influence augmented every day, and seemed to brighten under corrosion. Whether the gallantries and other irregularities of which he was accused, were founded, it is not easy to de-

cide, as he had the magnanimity or the policy never to notice or contradict such accusations. If, as was said, he wanted personal resolution, he certainly did not want political firmness, which he evinced on many occasions. Though supple, he could be inflexible; and though wary, he was determined. If he stooped to unworthy acts for popularity, he had at least the justification that arises from success; for probably no individual, without force, ever was enthroned in so predominant a personal influence. If Jefferson was the idolater, he was also the idol, of the people; and even Washington, though more revered, was not always more popular.

Mr. Jefferson was a man of an original cast of mind—a freethinker on all subjects. With abundant experience in diplomacy and politics, he was a master in intrigue. Though commonly too much governed by events, his system was nevertheless well settled; his mind penetrating, his judgment clear, and he looked into events deep and dispassionately. His enemies will not allow him to be any thing but a philosopher: his friends extol him as a sage. The tempestuous sea of liberty was his proper element, on which he ventured to a dangerous latitude, but without at least any personal misfortune. His manners were easy, though not elegant, his address unassuming and agreeable. His colloquial talents were considerable, and he understood perfectly the art of managing an unwieldy majority of the representatives—an art, without which a president of the United States will always be a cypher. He lived in one corner of a half finished, half furnished palace, plain



even to peculiarity in his appearance and establishment, accessible to every body at all times, affecting the utmost republican simplicity, and as carefully subversive of common forms, as most men in his situation would have been carefully observant of them. His conversation was free, his entertainments sociable; and though all ostentation was avoided, it is said few men understood the elegant arts of society better than he did. He was well read in books, but better in mankind. Geography and natural philosophy were his favourite studies: and being industrious, temperate and methodical, he never wanted leisure for these pursuits, notwithstanding numerous official avocations, a most extensive correspondence, and the distractions of a perpetual liability to unceremonious visits. But though geography and natural history are beholden to his researches and patronage, politics at last swallowed up all his ideas. As respected emolument and power he was moderate and disinterested. His conduct towards individuals, however, was too often marked by vindictiveness and duplicity, and the statesman frequently sunk in the politician. As sagacity was his strongest talent, insincerity was his most prominent defect. When he might have been re-elected president, he retired to his farm: and whatever were his motives to this resignation, it certainly was in conformity with the principles he had always professed, and an example that may be worthy of imitation by many of his successors.

His policy was extremely republican and imperturbably pacific. Whatever may be the permanent effect of his measures on the welfare of America,



and whatever may have been their immediate effect on the spirit and character of the American people, they were at any rate systematic and original. If they were experiments, they were tried on a great scale, and peace was their end. It seemed to be his ambition, and the invariable aim of his policy, to prove to the world that wars are not necessary to the preservation of peace, that a republican polity is susceptible of the utmost freedom without anarchy, and of combining with excessive liberty the utmost executive vigour, without incurring a despotism. For seven years of his administration, all his efforts appeared to aim at the diminution of his own authority, and the reduction of government, which he effected to such a degree, as to leave the people at last almost without any sensation of it. He had no talents for war, no pretensions to military fame. For the trophies of peace he contended, and withdrew before they could fade on his brow. His administration was original, pacific and mostly prosperous. It remains for a few years to come to pass judgment on its wisdom. Probably it will be least approved where he seemed anxious it should be most, in its rudest democratic features; inasmuch as all extremes endanger the system they are intended to improve. The reign of Numa, the administration of Cardinal Fleury, and most other æras of extraordinary peace have been succeeded by destructive wars. Time will show whether this first of national blessings was purchased by Mr. Jefferson at too dear a price.

A desire to serve their country according to the best of their respective abilities, is almost the only

point of resemblance between the presidents Adams and Jefferson, once political rivals, now political shades. When a little time shall have softened the asperity of faction, it is probable that the imbecility imputed to the one, and the hypocrisy charged to the other, will be in a great measure forgotten, and the patriotism of both be generally acknowledged. Mr. Jefferson's character and administration each present a larger field than those of Mr. Adams. They were more original and better sustained. Mr. Jefferson's nature was enthusiastic, but equable; Mr. Adams's dryer, but subject to gusts of temper. The one was visionary, but never capricious: the other resolute, but unstable. The deportment Mr. Adams affected was difficult and invidious; Mr. Jefferson's familiar and popular. But the former was becoming, though it failed; and the latter too often contemptible, though it succeeded. When the Spanish ambassadors found the Dutch deputies squatting on the ground, eating herrings with their fingers, one of their first impressions must have been disgust at the unseemliness of this republican festival; and the sentiment of every mind favourable to republicanism, at reading the account of this occurrence, which historians have taken care to set forth in all its particulars, must be a sentiment of contempt for so paltry an affectation of republican simplicity.

Jefferson's life was one continued course of experimental republicanism, conceived and executed on so large a scale, that it must benefit or injure extensively. Whereas Adams did little or no injury to his country, though he lost himself and dismembered

his party. His was a stormy course, now dazzling, now overcast, shortlived, and setting in discomfiture and obscurity. After an eccentric, but, successful career, Jefferson retired powerful, if not serene ; and though partially shorn of his beams, yet leaving the national horizon, even after his departure, marked with the radiance of his influence. His defects are concealed in the glare of his success. Mr. Adams's virtues obscured in the gloom of his fall.

A firm, but temperate adherence to the neutral policy, which Washington practised and recommended, would perhaps have maintained the first in the presidency. A more manly assertion of that policy, a less excursive departure from the established usages of government, and a less extravagant experiment of the elasticity of republicanism, would have rendered the latter's administration more permanently useful. They wandered both, particularly Jefferson, into extremes, forgetting that politics have their ascertained centre, to which, after all eccentricities, they invariably must gravitate, and where alone they rest in security.

As Mr. Madison has but just entered on the chief magistracy, his probation is to come, and his estimate can be conjectured only. The crisis is big with peril and uncertainty. The civilized world has been shaken from its ancient bases, by tremendous concussions, which the United States of America have felt but in their remote vibrations. Mr. Madison having distinguished himself as an accomplished speaker, and an able writer, it remains to be seen whether he will prove himself an enlightened executive

statesman. To remove foreign embarrassments and provide against aggressions, to conciliate the feuds of faction, to concentrate without consolidating a federal republican empire, to establish and maintain a national character for patriotism and probity, to encourage internal improvements, the arts and sciences, with imperial munificence, to guard fiscal disbursements with an honest economy, to cultivate peace, and prepare for war, are the great duties he has undertaken—duties, whose accomplishment his country expects from his zeal, moderation and abilities.



## LETTER VII.

FROM INCHIQUIN.

Dated at Washington.

THOUGH the literature of this country seems to have incurred the scorn of Europe, there certainly are two works, which as literary compositions on national subjects, are at least comparable, if not superior to any that have appeared in Europe since the independence of the United States: I mean Mr. Barlow's epic and Mr. Marshall's history; of which, as they have been grossly misrepresented by what are called the critics of Europe, I propose, in this letter, to take a transient review.

To begin with the Columbiad, of which the American press has just put forth a splendid edition, ornamented with rich engravings, and executed altogether in such a style as to place it decidedly at the head of American typography. The poet with a venial, if not a laudable partiality, has himself contributed large sums from his private fortune to the embellishment of this work, which does great honour to its author and his country; yet I cannot help regretting that so excellent, dispassionate and benevolent a writer did not bestow the time, talents and

expense appropriated to poetry, on some theme better suited to his genius, and which might have been more extensively useful. Mr. Barlow is yet only a living poet, and fame seldom gives the whole scope of her clarion but to the dead. He has every reason to be satisfied with his literary rank; though his pen is probably capable of productions superior to the Columbiad.

Poetry is so much the language of nature, that almost every youth of any fancy ventures a flight into its realms;

Tentavit in dulci juventa  
Fervor, et in celeres Iambos  
Misit furentem.

but so exclusively the prerogative of a peculiar genius, that from the age of Miriam down to these unharmonious days, the number of its elect is extremely precious. "Many have been called but few chosen." The facilities of printing have added to the number of poets, without improving their melody or sublimity. Smoothness of numbers, regularity of measure, skilfulness in short in the business of rhyming, are more common since the invention of types: but when we see all these prerequisites so frequently combined without creating a captivating or lasting poem, the inference is so much the stronger that genuine poetry is the offspring of a native genius. Of the great quantity of literary matter afloat good poetry constitutes a small proportion. By poetry I mean not generally the language of harmony or fiction, but a

metrical disposition of articulate sounds varying according to the taste of different nations, but so distinguished from all other writings as to be universally designated poetry.

Of all others the epic is that department of the divine art, which fewest have successfully attempted. Lyrical, dramatic, satiric, didactic, and other species, have had their shrines crowded with votaries, and with some, of almost all ages, who have been distinguished. But the epic poem is universally allowed to be of all poetical works most dignified, and at the same time most difficult of execution.\* An epic poem, the critics agree, is the greatest work nature is capable of, and genius is its first qualification.† Many nations celebrated for learning and refinement have flourished for centuries, without producing an epic poem; and one, perhaps the most enlightened of modern nations, after remaining till a very late æra without this honour, seems at last to have made the effort, only to show its incapacity to accomplish it. Critically speaking, Homer, Virgil and Milton occupy exclusively this illustrious quarter of Parnassus, and time alone can determine whether Barlow shall be seated with them.

The design of the Columbiad is vast and bold, more so than any other except Milton's. The discovery of a new world, involving all the noble images arising out of the first passage of the Atlantic ocean, affords a broader foundation for the sublime than any poet, except Milton, ever built upon. And the subject being national and even political, adds con-

\* Blair's Lectures.

† Pope's recipe to make an epic.

siderable interest to its essential grandeur. The conquest of America, its magnificent rivers, stupendous mountains, immense wealth, and the avulsion of these states from their mother country, afford as fruitful and fine an argument, as could be imagined for epic operation. But the story of the Columbiad is at once one of the noblest and the most arduous that could have been essayed. To make men heroes, they should be exhibited through the magnifying medium of time; for familiar characters and recent dates are hard to fashion to the epic standard.

The moral interwoven with the story is unexceptionably beautiful; and in respect to design and moral, the poem may be pronounced perfect. It is difficult for a lover of the *Iliad* and *Eneid* to subscribe to Mr. Barlow's opinion, that they are calculated to provoke wars and sustain tyrannies; though it may be admitted that they are not such systematic inculcations, as the *Columbiad*, of peace, virtue and the amelioration of mankind. When we reflect that Mr. Barlow has lived through the most tempestuous epoch of politics, that he participated in the revolution of his own country, and was a zealous coadjutor to the revolution of France, that he has always professed very decided sentiments relative to these thorny topics, and that, like other men, he must have his prepossessions and antipathies connected with them, it is impossible to applaud too highly the candour and impartiality with which he has treated the living personages and contested principles introduced into his poem. In benevolence and liberality he is pre-eminent. The good of mankind, much more



than their pleasure, seems to have been the end of his work : and with a strength of reason and abstraction from all prejudice, worthy so glorious a purpose, he pursues his aim in a strain purely and truly philosophical. There are many philosophising poets, and those who blend the useful with the sweet : But where shall we find a poem, in which the best interests of humanity are as steadily kept in view, or displayed with as much fascination, as in the *Columbiad* ?

This is great, but not extravagant praise. It is to be hoped Mr. Barlow prizes his philosophy so far beyond his poetry, that he will not be mortified to find panegyric pausing here. As a moral vision, broadly based in historical truth, with a due admixture of fiction and poetic machinery, constructed of interesting incidents, intersected with agreeable episodes, and conducted to an instructive catastrophe, the *Columbiad* will always be admired. If the words could be so transposed as to remove every vestige of versification, without impairing the sense and beauty of this composition, it would still be read, and read with pleasure, as a chaste, moral, and elegant performance. But its merits lie more in the moral of the design and force of the argument, than in the poetic charms of the execution.

It is evident the author is of a refined and contemplative mind ; but a disciplined taste will not make amends for a dearth of invention. Readers are advertised in the preface that they will find the unities in good preservation. But what great poet regards the unities ? A man of genius should as soon

propitiate the fatal sisters. A writer who sets out with the heathenish determination of adoring through every chapter, these mummies of the schools, creates for himself a most unnecessary and insurmountable difficulty. If in the course of his flight, he imperceptibly fall within their influence, he may derive fresh lustre from their reflection: but if with undeviating wing he follow their faint light, he must often grovel, when he ought to be soaring unchecked through the zodiac of fancy. The unity of action has still some followers left, though the fame of the *Orlando Furioso* proves how successfully even that may be violated. The unity of place in an epic is hardly practicable: and the unity of time is one of those relics of dramatic barbarity, which no great epic poet ever heeded, and which the first of dramatic poets has trampled into scorn. As the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* occupy several weeks each, the *Eneid* some months, and *Paradise* more than the allotted time, why should an American poet, breathing the air of liberty, and proclaiming its high behests, fall down before this calf of criticism!

From this fundamental error, spring others, all conspiring to debilitate the poem. For the preservation of the unities, as it should seem, the structure is but a conversation, and of course the interest to be excited in the characters is made distant and faint, in proportion to the duplicity of the fiction.

*Segnius irritant animos demisse per aurem.*

Every page of the *Columbiad* reminds us that it is but a conversation piece between Hesper and Colum-

bus, in which all is past or future, and nothing present or striking. The transactions indeed are recent, and the personages familiar. But this, which might enhance the interest, destroys the dignity of the poem.

It is clear not only from the boast of the preface, but also from a variety of internal evidences, that Mr. Barlow is devoted to the critical proprieties of his art. Yet at the threshold he falls into a fatal error, against which all critics, from Aristotle to Voltaire, have warned epic composers : that is, the narrative style. And after studying and analyzing his art for twenty years, he adopts the exploded unities.

The faintness of his characters and the prevalence of preceptive dissertation is another fault not less detrimental, which casts a chilling mistiness over the narrative. It is said one of the Corneilles preferred the *Pharsalia* to the *Eneid*, because of its abounding in stoical sentiments ; which is probably one of the many reasons why the *Eneid* is generally preferred to the *Pharsalia*. No man has yet appeared possessing the superlative art of making his heroes more engaging in reflection than action ; and Mr. Barlow dared greatly in the cause of truth, when he attempted to render his verse subservient to his moral.

This tenuity of interest is beaten out to a degree of languor, by the absence of all those objects of huge, deep-lined, disgusting depravity, which poets have properly introduced to render virtue by the contrast more lovely and attractive. There is a want of moral antithesis. The American poet does not seem to have reflected that mere virtue is apt to prove insipid, and requires the contrast of vice in odious shades to set

it off to advantage. In his praiseworthy pursuit of good, by an effort of benevolence, he leaves iniquity out of view; and the original blast of his poetry appears to have been refined down to the mould of philosophy.

Such are the constitutional defects of the Columbiad: defects which, however they may affect its poetic reputation, weigh little against its constitutional moral excellence.

As to the superstructure, whether it be that the author is not endowed with that fine phrensy, which is indispensable to the production of poetry of the first order, or whether it be that an overstrained subserviency to critical rules has cramped his native powers, I cannot determine: but it appears to want the fire and sublimity naturally expected in an epic. It is well planned and well executed; but we do not feel the master touches, which genius alone suggests, and no art can supply. There is great sweetness in the cadence and equality of numbers, an affluence of imagery and general chastness of sentiment. It is what the ancients termed *attic*: calm, elegant and refined. But we look in vain for that august and gorgeous majesty, appropriate to epic song, that sublimates our ideas as we read: or for those rapturous inspirations of genius, that possess the reader as they evidently did the writer, with a sort of delirium, which causes the soul, as it were, to rush into the brain, and overflow at the eyes. For these, and indeed all the attributes of lofty untamed genius, breathing celestial fire into the language of man, without which the most mellifluous versification



scarcely deserves to be entitled poetry, we look in vain through the passages of the *Columbiad*.

There is besides a deficiency of the pathetic. Pathos is doubly necessary in an epic. Independent of the immediate sympathies it rouses, it serves moreover to prepare for and palliate those extravagancies into which poetry sometimes plunges; and which, unless fortified with surrounding beauties, that master the feelings, excite all the effects of ludicrous hyperbole.

Non satis est pulchra esse poemata: dulcia sunt  
Et quocunque volent, animum auditoris agunto.

Hor. *Ars Poet.*

Que dans tous vos discours la passion émue,  
Aille chercher le cœur, l'échauffe et le rémue.

Boil. *Art Poet.*

Mr. Barlow never betrays a want of fancy, perception or sentiment. He is seldom harsh or prosaic. His learning, benevolence, elegance, taste, in short his eminent qualifications of many kinds, dignify and adorn every part of his performance, which has been carefully elaborated after the best models, and is as near perfection perhaps as art can render it. But it wants the ether of poetic creation, the genius of epic poetry. We are pleased, not fascinated: rarely shocked at ruggednesses; but never charmed with unexpected recreations. The *Columbiad* is all serene, agreeable and instructive; never delightful, pathetic or sublime. The couplets meander smoothly along, flowing in a natural current, without apparent effort or retrenchment; frequently swelled and rippled with the breath of fancy, and in almost every respect pictu-

resque and inviting ; but where do they gush with genius, or foam with the liquid fire of immortal song ?

There are minor blemishes, which would not escape a critic : and indeed this work has been shamefully criticised, especially in this country, to whose glory it is so purely dedicated. The faults to which I allude are, an inflation of language and proneness to alliteration. The choice of words is a matter of much nicety with poets. They have always been indulged in the use of such as prose writers dare not meddle with. Obsolete terms, verbs transmuted into nouns, and nouns into verbs, with many other such liberties they have never been grudged. But these indulgences are not to be abused with impunity. The adaptation of sound to sense is a leading excellence of the ancients, and has sometimes been attempted with partial success by later poets. But the Columbiad teems with words that are unusual, technical, and unmusical, without any perceptible reason or apology for their introduction. “ Words too remote, or too familiar, defeat the purpose of a poet ; ”\* for when the application is forced, the effect will be absurd.

To allege that a poem wants invention is to be sure denying it the first of poetical merits : but awarding it every other, is rendering a homage that few are entitled to. Mr. Barlow is now occupied, I understand, upon a work,† for which more undivided suffrages may be predicted ; and what country

\* Johnson’s Life of Dryden.

† A History of America.

can boast an epic on the national history equal to the Columbiad ?

Let us next consider Mr. Chief Justice Marshall's *Life of Washington*, another great national work. When we reflect that the Greeks had no historian till the 80th Olympiad, more than a thousand years from their earliest ages ; that Fabius Pictor, the first Roman who wrote an account of his country, did not write till 540 years after the foundation of Rome ; that Gregory of Tours is the earliest of what are termed modern historians ; and that many great nations, like the Carthaginians, have flourished and passed away without ever having had an historian to transmit their annals to posterity ; and when we advert moreover to the doubts that overcast all our best histories, while we render what is due for their multiplication and improvement of late years to the discovery of printing and progress of science, we cannot deny that the American history is a very early national production ; nor when we consider its materials and author, can we any more deny the pre-eminence of its authenticity.

During the war of the revolution, the present chief justice accompanied the American forces in the capacity of deputy judge advocate, which situation afforded him the best means of becoming practically conversant with the details of that contest, its difficulties and resources, the characters and views of those on whom it mainly devolved, and the construction, movements and engagements of the armies. In process of time he attained to situations of more importance, and successively filled several of the first

offices.\* Possessed of these advantages, endowed with a masculine, versatile and discriminating genius, and holding a place calculated to stamp weight on whatever he should publish, he was selected to compile from the manuscripts of Washington, and from the public records and papers, the joint annals of Washington and his country.

The objects of the work thus confided to his creation were to perpetuate a correct and honourable memorial of national events, and to immortalize Washington. The hero is therefore introduced with a full

\* The various public stations which the present chief justice of the United States has held, may be thought to indicate an early stage of society. During the war he served in the army, and to this day is as well known by the title of general as by that of judge. There are numerous instances of this combination, or rather perhaps confusion of civil, military and judicial functions. Mr. Marshall is the third chief justice, who has been within the same twelvemonth a judicial officer and a foreign ambassador. The most improved nations of the ancients knew no distinction between the performance of civil and military services. Cæsar was high priest before he commanded an army; nor was it till so late as the reign of Constantine that the Romans drew a line of separation. Glanville, a renowned justiciary of England in the reign of Henry II. was a great captain, and gained a signal victory over the forces of Scotland. This to be sure was in an age of rudeness. But at a later epoch, at the Assembly of the States of Orleans, in France, during the minority of Charles IX. the functions of justice and of war, theretofore indiscriminately administered, were for the first time formally set apart, as distinct professions, one to the Baillis of the long robe, the other to the Baillis of the short robe.



account of the discovery and improvement of North America down to the period when he appears upon the scene. After which period till his death, his biography is naturally interwoven with the transactions of the revolution which his achievements so largely contributed to effect, and with the formation of the government at the head of which he was placed.

As great expectations were entertained of this performance, considerable disappointment has been expressed at some of its alleged defects : particularly by those who, vitiated by the malevolent system of criticism that prevails in England and this country, are never satisfied with nature and plain sense, but incessantly crave the amazing and romantic. The press has rendered a modicum of learning so cheap and attainable, that in the subdivision of literary occupations, criticism has been seized upon as a separate handicraft, whose business it seems to be to dissect great books for the amusement of those who have not minds to embrace them entire. This new mystery has its new canons and models. The doctrine of passive assimilation is proclaimed throughout the realms of letters. Every book, before it circulates, is submitted to the ordeal ; and if it cannot endure the morsel of execration, its sale is preceded by sentence of combustion. The groundwork and substance of literature are no longer to be regarded ; but readers are taught to rest with fastidious inquiry on the superstructure and decorations. Like other things, learning seems to grow weak and vicious with its spread and refinement ; and that primeval age to

be returning, when history will be unpalatable unless preserved in poetry, ethics in apothegms, and philosophy in fables. In every department of letters, standards are erected, to which fresh publications are referred for their estimate. But is it fair to condemn an American historian to oblivion, because he is less entertaining than Hume or Gibbon, or an epic poet, because he falls short of Milton?—Extend the test. Compare Marshall with Smollet, Bissett or Fox, and Barlow with the metre-mongers of the day, the present masters of the song in England, and neither they nor their country need fear the comparison.

When critics carp at Marshall's history, because, as has been averred, it moves heavily along under a load of provincial documents, a propensity to condemnation must pervert their faculties. None but a trading-critic could reprehend an annalist for giving details instead of a retrospect, and the speeches of his personages precisely as they were delivered, instead of cutting them down to his own condensation. The great end of historical writing is the dissemination of moral truth: subsidiary, but subordinate to which purpose, are the attributes of composition, distribution and reflections. One of the best informed of late writers has ventured to assert that ancient history is like the cabbage as big as a house, and the pot as big as a church, that was made to boil the cabbage.\* Without subscribing to this homely sarcasm, which strikes at the root of the tree of much of our most useful knowledge, it cannot be denied that history,

\* Volt. Es. sur les Mœurs, Disc. Prelim. 194.

both ancient and modern, is too often and palpably fabulous; and that mankind are of late more than ever disposed to postpone authenticity to composition. The public documents of which the American chief justice had the disposition, would be inestimable, even if arranged by inferior hands, without any attempt at shaping them into a connected narrative. But wrought, as they have been by him, into a clear, manly, systematic and philosophical history, without a grain of merit on the score of composition, they would outweigh the most beautiful composition that ever was formed. There is not another national history extant, which is composed entirely of authentic, public materials, by a cotemporary and a participator.

Nor is the composition unworthy of the subject. The commentaries and reflections are simple, natural and just. The style and language plain, rapid, nervous, unsophisticated, perhaps too bare of ornament, and sometimes liable to the imputation of peculiarity; but never rough, irksome or inelegant. The poet and the orator may melt in cadences or bristle with antitheses. But the historian must hold an iron pen, and march with a measured step. He profanes his function, whenever the slightest fiction colours his descriptions, or wit flaunts in his observations. Fine writing, says Addison, consists in the expression of sentiments, that are natural, without being obvious: or as Boileau, with (if possible) still greater felicity defines it, "*des idées bien éclaircies et mise dans un beau jour,*" which may be translated, a pleasing exposition of clear ideas. It is this that constitutes the



secret charm of prose composition; not the novelty of the sentiments, the polish of the style, or the scintillations of fancy.

As simplicity is the first beauty of style, so is authenticity the chief recommendation, the sun of history, before whose effulgence all secondary merits fade away, and without which a constellation of factitious lights casts but a feeble and unwholesome lustre. The historian, who sacrifices his inquiries after facts to burnish up his periods, or who, with an abundance of authentic materials, appears too frequently through the solid texture of his work, in episodes, animadversions, and characteristics, exposes himself to the malevolence of his cotemporaries and the contradiction of posterity. Gibbon sinks through his "luminous and luxuriant pages" into the partisan of infidelity. And Hume provokes doubts and opposition, that might have been avoided, by sparing his readers some of his own deistical opinions, and what Mr. Fox calls "his childish admiration of princes."—These indeed are regal banquets. But we rise from them with less satisfaction, than from the homelier fare of the American: for we are certain of imbibing truth alone from the one, and poison is to be suspected in the other's golden cups. The latter does not indeed present us with an occasional appendix of disquisition or a cabinet of historical curiosities. It is easy to entertain ordinary readers with Julian the Apostate's beard, or Thomas-a-Becket's castigation. But the American historian had neither anomalies nor miracles to deal with. The recent discovery of a new world; the still more recent struggles of an



infant people to shake off the trammels of colonization ; late events, of little except moral interest ; partial, procrastinated, and seldom signalized warfare ; the adjustment of treaties and formation of republican institutions, though highly interesting to moral contemplation, are much less malleable, than remote and doubtful traditions of astonishing transactions into that magazine of entertainment, which seems to be looked for in a modern history. But whatever the present age may desire, facts soon become vastly more important than dissertation ; nor can moral results ever be fairly taken, unless readers may implicitly rely on the truth of the details.

The narrative of the Life of Washington might perhaps have been enlivened with more biographical and characteristic sketches. But it must be remembered that to draw living characters is an arduous and invidious task. And when the whole subject matter is well considered, the author will be found entitled to our approbation for the caution he has exercised in this particular. As to Washington himself, the uniformity of his life, and taciturnity of his nature precluded any sufficient funds for this minor scene : though I cannot refrain from observing that his unaffected and warm piety, his belief in the christian religion, and exemplary discharge of all its public and private duties, might have been enlarged upon with more emphasis and advantage.

At such a period as the present, when the press, instead of enlightening the community, is converted into a most powerful engine of falsehood, proscrip-

tion and confusion, when letters are perverted to the most treacherous and unworthy purposes, when histories, state papers, public records and official communications are mutilated, suppressed or published, as it suits the object of the moment, to distort or disguise, and not to make known facts; and when especially a usurpation of hypercriticism is subsisting on the excoriation of literature, it behoves every American, who admires the history of his country, it behoves indeed every man, who loves truth, to uphold an authentic national work, like Marshall's, against its malignant enemies and lukewarm friends, and to cherish it as a performance whose subject and authenticity alone, independent of any other merits, will preserve and magnify it for ever.

## LETTER VIII.

FROM INCHIQUIN.

Dated at Washington.

YOUR short letter of the 20th October, which I received a few days ago by a vessel from Amsterdam, imposes a harder task than I had prepared to perform. Though I have never been inattentive to the national characteristics of the American people, it was not my intention to write a separate account of them; but rather that you should glean these particulars from my communications generally. *Non hoc pollicitus.* As, however, you enjoin it, I will cheerfully endeavour, from the scanty materials, and little time I can command, to sketch their character; premising that I enter on the subject with more than ordinary diffidence, from the assurance I feel of its intrinsic difficulty, and the many prejudices I know I must encounter. To be as perspicuous as possible, I shall pursue the inquiry under the separate considerations of, 1. Their origin and population; 2. Their provincial diversities; 3. Their natural and political association; 4. Its moral results; and, lastly, their resources and prospects.

1. History affords no instance of a nation formed originally on such principles, or of such materials, as the American. It is a common opinion, that these materials were of the worst species; vagabonds, mendicants, and convicts. But the fact is, that the first settlers were mostly of reputable families and good character, who came to America under the auspices of intelligent and distinguished individuals, in the language of their own epic, "braving the dangers of untraversed seas," in an honourable and sacred cause. From these sources, the great currents of American population have proceeded, increased much more partially than is commonly supposed, from foreign streams.\*

The indigenous stocks of nations are patriarchal; but time, conquest, and migration, have successively engrafted so many exotic species on almost every original stock, that there are few people, if any, whose descent is unadulterated from their primeval ances-

\* After the battle near Worcester, where Charles I. was defeated by Cromwell, 7,000 Scotch and Dutch, who were taken prisoners, were sent to London, there sold as slaves, and thence transported to work the American plantations. But though these men had the misfortune to be treated ignominiously, contrary to the laws of war and society, as now acknowledged, they are not to be accounted infamous, and superadded to the imaginary hordes of bondsmen and convicts, that are, by the vulgar in Europe, supposed to have been the original and most numerous occupants of the American states. It is indeed of very little consequence to the present inhabitants of this country, who the settlers of it were two hundred years ago. But if this point were worth an inquiry, it might be shown that the vulgar opinion is as erroneous as it is absurd.



tors. Without extending our view to Asia or Africa, where their ancestry is much purer than in Europe, a slight examination of European pretensions to original nationality, will serve to show how little there is to boast of. The barbarian aborigines of most European countries, have been mixed with Roman conquerors, and thus blended, received the compulsory accessions of northern savages, who, at later periods, overran nearly all the continent. The ancient Romans, a highly national, were not an original people, but a band of freebooters, whose first national act was forcibly uniting themselves with foreign women, and who, during the first centuries of their existence, were almost perpetually employed in the subjugation of foreign nations, that were successively embodied with the Roman empire. Modern Europe is composed of mixed nations, whose broadest distinctions have appeared since their resurrection from the darkness of the middle ages, and are ascribable more to the influence of laws, than to the difference of climate or natural constitution.\*

The white population of North America is of European extraction, with scarcely any admixture with the Indian aborigines. At least three-fourths of the people of the United States derive their descent and national sympathies, through a tradition varying from one to two centuries, from neither conquerors, colonization, adventurers, nor savages, but from

\* The origin of nations is buried in fable. Father Lafiteau traces the genealogy of the Americans, some of them, to the ancient Greeks.—*Volt. Es. sur les Mœurs, Disc. Prelim.* 29.

sects of respectable exiles, by whom the basis of the population was broadly laid in principles and habits of virtue, independence and toleration. Nor were the American provinces properly colonies, though they yielded obedience to the mother countries. The governments of Europe at first interested themselves very little in their settlement or success. The earliest and most important settlements were achieved, not by individual adventurers, or individual families, but by the united enterprise of sects and congregations, actuated by motives of piety and freedom, associated by common sentiments and common hardships; and it was not till these attempts were in a prosperous train, that mother countries, as they entitled themselves, assumed any active jurisdiction over them. The eastern section of North America, called New England, was originally settled by English puritans, the companions of Cromwell, Hazlerig, and Hampden, who were themselves inhibited from a similar design, after every arrangement was completed for carrying it into effect.\* The occupation of Carolina was effected by French Huguenots, whose emigration was promoted and patronised by Coligny.† The followers of Penn possessed themselves peaceably of Pennsylvania, about

\* *Brit. Emp. in Amer. vol. 2. Roberts. Amer. vol. 4. c. 10.* It is matter of curious speculation what might have been the consequences, both in England and America, if the restless genius of Cromwell had been expelled from the theatre where it afterwards operated such astonishing effects, and unfettered on the desert shores of America.

† 5 *Rayn. p. 93.*

the same time that Baltimore and his persecuted English and Irish Catholic associates were seated in Maryland. These expeditions were composed of pilgrims, from different countries and of various creeds; but all christians, all enthusiasts, flying from persecution, and conducted by leaders eminently fitted to be the founders of new empires. Excepting the colonization of Virginia under Raleigh, the most numerous white proprietors of the American soil were religious exiles, from whom the greater part of the present race are sprung. If, as is supposed, an illustrious national ancestry be of any effect in forming and invigorating a national character, the origin of this nation was noble and auspicious. The most intractable part of that fierce and enthusiastic devotion to certain principles, in religion and politics, which expelled from France a large division of its most useful inhabitants, which revolutionized England, and impressed upon that kingdom an energetic spirit of freedom and boldness of maritime adventure, that laid the groundwork of all its subsequent greatness, sought vent in an uncivilized hemisphere, where its ardency has hitherto met with no obstacle that could restrain it, where it has been dilated but not diminished by time and prosperity, and infused the fanatical morality, the factious republicanism, and the general enthusiasm, for which, I think, the Americans are remarkable.

From this origin the augmentation has been prodigious; so much so, as to confound the calculations of those who did not make allowance for the extraordinary circumstances of the country, but chose to



apply the ordinary and established rules of political arithmetic to determine the increase of a country not within their principles.\* An exuberant and inexhaustible territory, healthy occupations and temperate lives have impelled population at an incredible rate, notwithstanding the devastations of pestilence, which seems to be incidental to a new country. Where nature is bountiful of the inducements to marriage, the increase will be great, even in spite of the wars and follies of man.† And where subsistence is scarce, it is to little purpose to legislate for a census. The spring of population lies beyond the reach of politicians; and can neither be relaxed materially by wars, nor forced by artificial bounties. In some parts of Europe two children are reckoned from a marriage. In England it is said there are four.

In the United States the average is nearly six.‡ So long as the soil can bear a large multiplication, the momentum will increase. I have no data by which to ascertain the American census at an early period. But Dr. Franklin, who was attentive to statistical inquiries, estimated it, in 1753, at little more than one million.§ The augmentation varies in different places, but on a general average is double in about twenty

\* *Brit. Emp. in Amer. vol. 1. p. 227. Rayn. vol. 6. p. 351.*  
The Abbé's maximum of ten millions as the *ne plus ultra* of North American population, is almost attained already, and will doubtless be exceeded before the year 1816.

† *Malth. b. 2. c. 11.*

‡ *Blodg. Econ. 58.*

§ *Marsh. vol. 1. p. 373. Blodg. Econ. 73. Malth. b. 2. c. 11.* states the population of New England at 21,200 in 1643, and half a million in 1760.



years. Allowing between one and two millions fifty years ago, and between seven and eight millions now the natural duplications yield about that amount which proves that the accessions from foreign countries are by no means so considerable as is generally imagined. But of this there are still more decisive proofs. It has been ascertained by actual enumeration\* that the importations of foreigners for ten years preceding 1805 did not exceed four thousand. Many of these are certainly the refuse of Irish, German and English populace, who have mostly taken up their residence in the cities on the Atlantic side of the continent. But the interior, especially the new lands, is principally settled by native Americans, the course of whose migration is from east to west. In and about the towns on the seaboard, in the middle and southern states, there are many emigrants from Europe, some of whom are ignorant and turbulent; but their proportion in the community is not considerable, and the inhabitants of New England universally, with the yeomanry in general throughout the United States, are natives.

2. In point of origin the people of this country are less homogeneous than many others. But the primary causes of their migration hither were the same; the liberality of their institutions, their intelligence and common interests, together with external pressure, have tended to approximate them; and though so small a population is scattered over so extensive a territory, including many varieties of climate, their provincial diversities are fewer and less striking, than might be expected. About nine tenths speak pre-

\* *Blodg. Econ.* 75.

cisely the same language, which is a national unity probably not to be found, without some variation of dialect, among the same number, so largely diffused, in any other quarter of the world. The German\* is the only tongue spoken, that forms an exception to this unity of language. That is gradually losing ground; and unless some unforeseen calamity should check the progress of natural increase, it is probable, that in one century, there will be one hundred millions of people in America, to whom the English speech, in its purity, will be vernacular.†

\* The provincialisms of most countries are notorious. The Grecian dialects are preserved to this day. A Parisian cannot understand the Patois of the southern departments of France. In Great Britain, where, from the circumscription of the territory, the diversity is more remarkable, the inhabitants of different counties are almost unintelligible to each other. If a Londoner, a Yorkshireman, and a Cornishman, a Welshman, a Scotsman and an Irishman were cast together upon a desert island, they might be at a loss for a medium of oral communication. So various, in so small a space, are the tongues of the British empire. In America there is no difference of dialect. There is a hardness of pronunciation in the north, and an indolent mellowness in the south; but no striking or positive variation. The Prince of Benevento, (M. Talleyrand,) in his Memoir on the United States, read before the National Institute in the year 5, declares identity of language one of the most binding relations, that can exist among men.

† To the admirers of the fulness and majesty of the English language, it may be consolatory to reflect, that while French arms and the French tongue are pervading every section of Europe, to such an extent as to threaten the extinction of the English, there is on this side the Atlantic a nation capable of preserving and transmitting it to future ge-

The laws, manners, interests, religion and opinions of the inhabitants of the different states, while they differ somewhat in detail, essentially correspond, and coincide in principle: and it is rather from physical than moral circumstances, that their diversities arise.

That demarcation, which the hand of Heaven has every where traced between natives of northern and those of southern latitudes, is aggravated here by the pernicious influence of subordinate slavery, with which the southern Americans indulge their constitutional indolence. A transposition of labour upon slaves is incompatible with industry and morals, the most certain wealth of nations. Man will not labour, where he can substitute slaves; and wherever man does not labour, he will abuse his time and faculties. Plutarch makes Alexander the Great say to his voluptuous officers, that nothing is so royal as to work;\* and certainly it may be said with emphatic propriety that nothing is so republican. Not that there is any thing in inferior servitude militant with republicanism. On the contrary, "where there is a vast multitude of slaves, as in Virginia and the Carolinas, those who are free, are by far the most proud and jealous of their freedom. Freedom is to them not only an enjoyment, but a kind of rank and privilege. Not seeing there that freedom, as in countries where it is a common blessing, and as broad and general as the air, may be

generations. Supposing the French to supersede all others in Europe, yet a century hence the English will be spoken by the greatest numbers.

\* *Plut. de Mac. Vie d'Alexandre, tom. 9. p. 89.*



united with much abject toil, with great misery, with all the exterior of servitude, liberty looks, amongst them, like something that is more noble and liberal. The people of the southern colonies are much more strongly, and with a higher and more stubborn spirit, attached to liberty than those of the northern. Such were all the ancient commonwealths; and such will be the masters of slaves, who are not slaves themselves. In such a people the haughtiness of domination combines with the spirit of freedom, fortifies it, and renders it invincible.\* But it relaxes the sinews of industry, corrupts the morals, and checks amelioration. Fallow lands, in the titular possession of a few opulent individuals, defended from creditors by feudal tenures, the menial, the agricultural, and even the mechanic offices performed by unrewarded bondsmen, education, except among the rich, much neglected, religious exercises little attended to, commerce, as an unworthy employment, consigned to strangers, large fortunes and expensive establishments, are some of the disadvantageous peculiarities, by which the southern are distinguished from the eastern states. Equality of possessions, general information, simplicity of manners, sagacity, industry, frugality, enterprise, a rigorous observance of Presbyterian rites, a strong pervading tincture of puritanical tradition, are prominent features of the latter—features, which have expanded with their growth, but retain all the marked character of their original cast.

\* *Burke's Speech on conciliation with America.* See to the same effect, *Montesq. Grand. et Decad. des Rom. c. 13. p. 147.*



The resemblance to England is strongest in the east, and weakens proceeding south, till it totally disappears.\*

The division, characteristic and territorial, into which the Americans themselves have separated their country is that of the southern, northern or middle, and eastern states. The western, or those separated by the great intersecting ridge of mountains, from the Atlantic states, is a natural allotment, scarcely yet acknowledged, exhibiting no moral varieties from the others; and formed by migrations from the east and the Atlantic side.

The eastern and southern sections of the union are inhabited chiefly by natives. The population of the

\* The inhabitants of New England are to the other Americans, what the Scotch are to the English, and what at a late period of the Roman empire, the Greeks were to the Romans. Their population being full, they leave home poor but well instructed, shrewd and indefatigable, and in almost every quarter of the union succeed in the attainment of many of the most lucrative and influential situations. This, as the same thing does in England, and did in Rome, excites a jealousy on the part of the other Americans. One of Juvenal's most animated satires is addressed to Umbricius, on this subject. But the complaint itself is an acknowledgment of the superior adroitness of the Greeks.

Ingenium velox, audacia perdita, sermo

Promptus, et Isæ torrentior, ede, quid illum

Esse putes? quemvis hominem secum attulit ad nos,

Grammaticus, rhetor, geometres, pictor, aliptes,

Augur, schœnobates, medicus, magus omnia novit.

Græculus escuriens in cœlum, jusseris, ibit

Ad summam non Maurus erat, neque Sarmata neque Thrax.

Qui sumsit pennas, mediis sed natus Athenis.

middle states is more heterogeneous, partaking to a certain degree of the properties of the east and south, blended in different proportions with its own. Less profuse or fierce than those of the south, less hospitable or amiable than either; without the romantic lassitude, the lofty prejudices and haughty republicanism of the southern gentlemen, or the invincible enterprise of the eastern people, without that boldness of characteristic, and inveterate provincialism, that are displayed in both;\* but richer, less prejudiced, more contented, and more thriving in population, agriculture, commerce, manufactures and resources than either; their capitals being the emporia of the continent, the seat of its empire and its arts, the inhabitants of what are called the middle states differ more from each other, and less from those of the

\* Without even excepting the English, the eastern and southern inhabitants of the United States are the most roving of any civilized people. They wander much from home, in pursuit of education, trade, and pleasure, are gregarious when abroad, and generally desirous of returning. Patriotism, as a broad attachment distinguished from provincialism, prevails as much in the middle, as in the southern or eastern states. But the latter are more national. They have each a stronger unity of characteristic. The feelings expressed in the *reminiscitur Argos* of the Latin poet, and in the *Ranz des Vaches* of the modern Swiss, are strongly implanted in their breasts. The Prince of Benevento expresses his opinion that the occupation of fishing weakens the love of country. But in the people of New England, who are mostly fishermen, whom Brissot styles *audax Iapeti genus*—and upon whom one of Burke's most splendid flights is bestowed, a perpetual existence at sea is associated with an invincible attachment to the shores of their nativity.

east and south, and exhibit in our present view a much less interesting spectacle.

3. The lien of this "mighty continental nation"\* is commercial liberty: not mere political liberty, but positive freedom; geographical absolution from all but the slightest restraints; the inherent and inalienable birthright of this adolescent people, upon the enjoyment of which they entered by a lineal title, the moment they felt strength enough to cast off the trammels of infancy: a heritage as natural as the air they breathe, which, whether it sweeten the toil of New England, where the same farmer who sows and reaps his own field, is also the mariner, who attends his produce on distant ventures, or inflate the pride of the south, where the poor black sows the ground and the rich white reaps the harvest, is still and every where the same "brave spirit," pervading the whole republic, and binding it together by an influence, not the less powerful, because its current is propelled by an animating contrariety. The American people, dispersed over an immense territory, abounding in all the means of commercial greatness, to whom an opportunity was presented at an early period of adapting their government to their circumstances, followed the manifest order of nature, when they adopted a free, republican, commercial federation.

The course and catastrophe of the French revolution have cast a gloom over republicanism, which perhaps it may never shake off; and which, at least for the present, renders it in Europe repulsive and

\* *Lord Chatham's Speech delivered 10th January, 1775.*



discreditable. But the American republic is the natural fruit of the American soil: the spirit of its freedom is impassioned, perhaps factious, but not furious or bloody. It is in vain to attempt, and absurd to desire, the introduction of the republican polity as a general melioration of the lot of nations. Many causes, that are beyond the reach of man, must concur to its establishment; and there have been few countries predisposed, as they should be, for its reception. The English loathed the adulteration they endured during the æra of their commonwealth, when hypocritical lowliness, ferocious fanaticism, and overstrained economy, were substituted for the generous and munificent patriotism which ennobled and perpetuated the ancient republics. Yet short as was its duration, and perverted as were its principles, such is the natural vigour of a free commonwealth, that the English received from theirs an impulse, which while it darkened their character, greatly increased their power, and gave it the direction it has ever since followed. The French had none of the ideas or propensities suited to freedom: and whatever may have been the effects of their revolution in deracinating abuses, and regenerating their national energies, it was not to be supposed that a republican government would endure in France. The French had not the raw material. But the American federation is the natural offspring of commerce and liberty, whose correlative interests will bind it together in principle, even after its formal dissolution. What are the merits of those institutions which have been framed by the people of this country it is not



necessary here to inquire, or whether the government be calculated for strength and durability. The states, as now organized, may be consolidated or dismembered, may fall asunder by the weight and weakness of the union, or may separate in a convulsion. But it is the perfection of polity, when it rests on natural bases ; and a disunion of the American states, whatever might be its political consequences, could not destroy or materially change their mutual commercial dependence, and would not probably diminish the almost universal attachment of the people to republican institutions. The empire, in point of extent, is unwieldy. The east and the south are already jealous of each other, and the west regards them both with suspicion. But a community of language, of laws, of political attachments, and a reciprocity of interests are strong bonds of union. So many theories have been projected on the excellence of a federal republic, and so much disgrace has of late been cast upon republicanism by both its advocates and enemies, that the American experiment must be regarded with no small anxiety : for certain it is that an enlightened and predominant republic, such as those of Greece, Carthage and Rome, is the most rational and glorious object the mind can contemplate.

4. The prevailing character of these national elements is the natural result from their geographical and political combination. It is natural that a people descended so lately from pilgrims and sectaries should be enthusiasts—that a commercial people should be enterprising and ingenious—that a repub-

lican people, whose press is free, and whose government is a government of laws and opinion, should be intelligent and licentious—that an adolescent and prosperous people should be aspiring, warlike and vainglorious. This is not the character the Americans bear in Europe. The question there is whether they have any national character at all; and the common impression is that they have not.

There is a great proneness to misrepresent national character, which is a consideration extremely obscured by gross prejudices.\* That verisimilitude of

\* See *Hume's Essay on National Character*.

Statesmen have studied to render patriotism, which ought to be one of our noblest sentiments, a narrow, cowardly and illiberal prejudice. What has it been but a blind and narrow principle producing in every country a contempt of other countries? *Dr. Price's Discourse on Love of our Country*.

What are the characteristic traits of modern nations? The Germans are a people, among whom the profound corruption of the great has never influenced their inferiors, who love their country, notwithstanding the indifference of their masters—a people, among whom the spirit of revolt and fidelity, of independence and servility, has never changed since the days of Tacitus. The Batavians are still industrious, phlegmatic and rational. Italy, with her hundred princes, and magnificent recollections, is still the contrast of obscure and republican Switzerland. Spain, separated from other nations, exhibits a character of isolated originality. The stagnation of manners in Spain may preserve that nation, after all other Europeans shall have declined in corruption.

A mixture of the blood of Germany and blood of France, the English perpetually display their twofold origin: their government formed of royalty and aristocracy; their religion less pompous than the Catholic, more brilliant than the Lu-

habits, manners and propensities, indicative of the inhabitants of ancient countries, is not an infallible index to the national character : there are vulgar fea-

theran ; their military at once ponderous and active ; their literature, arts, language, features, and the very forms of their bodies, partake of the two sources from whence the nation proceeds. To the simplicity, calmness, good sense, and slowness of the Germans, they join the glare, fury, folly, vivacity and elegance of the French.

The English excel in public spirit ; the French in national honour. Eldest sons of antiquity, the French, Romans in genius, are Greeks in character. Restless and volatile in prosperity, constant and invincible in adversity ; formed for all arts ; civilized to excess during a period of tranquillity ; brutal and savage in political troubles ; floating, like vessels without ballast, at the breath of passion, now in the clouds, a moment after in the abyss ; enthusiasts in good and evil ; rendering the one without expecting a return, and perpetrating the other without remorse ; forgetful alike of their crimes and their virtues ; pusillanimous lovers of life during peace, prodigal of it in battle ; vain, sarcastic, and ambitious ; despising whatever is not theirs ; amiable individuals ; disagreeable in bodies ; charming in their own country ; insupportable elsewhere ; by turns more gentle and innocent than the lamb that is slaughtered, more remorseless and ferocious than the tiger that devours—such formerly were the Athenians, and such now are the French. *Chateaubriand Génie du Christianisme*.

In this beautiful picture we perceive to be sure a strong tinge of national partiality ; but we perceive also the touches of a master. Some of the features of the French have been forced forward in most striking lights, by the late revolution : and others are exactly true to the life. But what is principally evident throughout the whole is the original impressions, which ages of refinement have not worn away or improved.



tures, striking, but deceptive. Heroes, poets and historians will adapt national greatness to a poor and enslaved people. Peace, plenty and a certain degree of obscurity render a people happy ; and if they are happy, they will commonly be virtuous.\* But virtue

Among the ancients the Greeks are a more eminent people than their conquerors the Romans, who did not achieve their conquest till the former were distracted and exhausted ; and who even then, and everafter continued in all things but arms, the imitators and slaves of the Greeks. There were comparatively more great men in Greece than in Rome ; particularly during the periods of their decline respectively. When Greece began to totter, a succession of heroes appeared to her relief. But after a short though glorious struggle, Rome was enslaved, and declined, without effort or interruption. There was in the character of the Grecian people that alacrity which is the spring of so many great actions ; to which the French now lay claim.

\* If indeed we subscribe to Voltaire's dogma on this subject, we should deprive most nations of any character at all. La populace, says he, doit etre en tout pays uniquement occupée du travail des mains. L'esprit d'une nation réside toujours dans le petit nombre qui fit travailler le grand, qui le nourrit, et le gouverne. *Es. sur les Mœurs, tom. 3. c. 47. p. 319.* But Dr. Johnson pronounces a very different opinion. The true state of every nation, says he, is the state of common life. The manners of a people are not to be found in the schools of learning, or the palaces of greatness, where the national character is obscured or obliterated by travel or instruction, by philosophy or variety : nor is public happiness to be estimated by the assemblies of the gay, or the banquets of the rich. The great mass of nations is neither rich nor gay. They, whose aggregate constitutes the people, are found in the streets and villages, in the shops and farms, and from them collectively considered must the measure of



and happiness are not so imposing as greatness, in the national, or in the individual estimate. The same principle that induces a preference of the great to the good, bears admiration from the wise and peaceable commonwealth to the belligerent empire. We prize military renown beyond civil or pacific distinction, following the blaze of glory rather than the sober light of wisdom. We eulogize for its national character, a warlike empire, composed of the most despicable materials, with no common spirit but implicit obedience to chiefs, through whose merits alone it is eminent; and deny the same homage to a country composed of a virtuous and intelligent population, governed by one common sentiment of policy, but whose policy happens to be peace. No excellence in the arts, no morals, no refinement, no intelligence, no literary fame, will give national importance, without an ability for war, and a high martial rank among sovereign states. The Chinese, in many respects a wise and original people, consisting of three hundred millions of souls under one head, are despised by the pettiest nation in Europe. The Swiss and the Dutch, the only powers of modern Europe that never wage foreign wars, acquired the only national reputation they ever enjoyed, not by any peculiarity of

general prosperity be taken. As they approach to delicacy a nation is refined; as their conveniences are multiplied, a nation, at least a commercial nation, must be denominated wealthy. *Tour to the Hebrides*, p. 32, 33. To the meridian of what nation in Europe is Voltaire's language suitable? Certainly not to that of the gay and amiable people, of whom he was one.

manners, or wise institutions, but by their capacity for resistance to hostile encroachment. Reflecting men in Europe regard the American revolution as a period when the American character shone forth with considerable distinction. Yet the same nation, in part the same men, after thirty years of peace and prosperity, are supposed to have lost the energy of patriotism they then displayed. An expansion of population, of resources, of territory, of power, of information, of freedom, of every thing that tends to magnify man, is supposed to have degenerated the Americans. Is this the course of nature? All things are said to tend from their origin to a certain degree of perfection, and thence to decline and dissolution. But can the time be so soon arrived for the tide of American declension? According to the common course of events, the genius of the American people should be enhanced, not deteriorated, by the peace and prosperity they have enjoyed since the period of their birth as a nation. By sketches of the present state of their religion, legislation, literature, arts and society, with an aspect never turned from their national characteristics, and embracing no further details than are necessary for their exposition, I propose to endeavour to refute the false opinions inferred from their tranquillity, and at the same time to exhibit their national character.

In this age of infidelity and indifference, to call any people a religious people, is a license, which nothing but a comparative view of the state of religion in this and in other christian countries, can uphold. It is, however, true, that the number of persons de-

voted to pious exercises, from reflection, independent of education and habit, is greater in the United States, than in any other part of the world, in proportion to the population; and religious morality is more general and purer here than elsewhere. The political ordinance of religious toleration is one of those improvements in the science of politics, for which mankind will acknowledge their obligations to America: and the divorce of church and state is an inestimable pledge for the purity and stability of republican government. Religious toleration, says the Prince of Benevento, is one of the most powerful guaranties of social tranquillity; for where liberty of conscience is respected, every other right cannot fail to be so. As christianity and civilization have hitherto been inseparable companions, it is probable that where the practice of the former is most acceptable, the influence of the latter will be the most pervading. One of the first acts of Penn and Baltimore in their respective provinces, was the absolute separation of ecclesiastical from secular concerns: a catholic and a quaker,\* the extremes of the christian creed, thus signalizing their administrations by a liberality equally wise and magnanimous, the beneficial effects of which will be felt to the latest generation. In New England, where presbyterianism is the predominant faith, fanaticism expired slowly, and proscription blazed up more than once, after it

\* It is worth remarking, that Chesterfield calls the quakers the best behaved men, and that Voltaire considered them the most catholic christians.

was believed and ought to have been extinguished.\* But at this time persecution is impracticable. Laws, and opinions stronger than laws, prevent it. The churches of Rome, of England, of Luther, of Wesley and of Fox, in all their various subdivisions and modifications, subsist in peace and harmony, worshipping without molestation, according to their different tenets. Universal toleration has produced numberless particular sects, each maintained by enthusiastic proselytes. Thus the Americans are a nation of freethinkers ; and having moreover not only no established church, but being perfectly unrestrained in their belief, those persuasions are most followed, which involve the utmost refinements of enthusiasm, and rejection of ceremonial. After shaking off entirely the shackles of superstition, it is not easy to avoid the phrensy of fanaticism ; for one begins where the other ends. But it is the advantage of the latter, that whereas superstition binds the soul in sloth and fear, fanaticism sets it free from their mortification ; and though for a time it may float in an unsettled medium, it will settle at last on the right base.†

\* Alors n'admettant plus d'autorité visible,  
Chacun fut de la foi censé juge infaillible ;  
Et sans être approuvé par le clergé Romain,  
Tout protestant fut Pape, une bible à la main.

† These observations on the state of religion in the United States, are meant to be confined to its national effects ; forasmuch as the multiplication and freedom of sects may affect the genius of the people. It is far from my intention to pronounce any opinion upon their respective merits. Thus much, however,



The civil institutions of this country conduce equally with religious toleration to habits of intelligence and independence. Natural equality perhaps does not exist. Birth, affluence and talents create distinctions, notwithstanding political regulations to the contrary. The pride of family, the vanity of wealth, and other adventitious advantages, are not without their sensation in society, even in this young republic. But patrician and plebeian orders are unknown, and that third or middle class, upon which so many theories have been founded, is a section that has no existence here. Luxury has not yet corrupted the rich, nor is there any of that want, which classifies the poor. There is no populace.\* All are people.† What in other countries is called the populace, a compost heap, whence germinate mobs, beggars, and tyrants, is not to be found in the towns; and there is no peasantry in the country. Were it not for the slaves of the south, there would be but one rank. By the facility of subsistence and high price of labour, by the universal education and universal suffrage, almost every man is a yeoman or a citizen, sensible of his individual importance. Not more than 350,000 of the seven millions composing the population of the American states, reside in large towns. The remainder live on farms or in villages.

I may be permitted to say, that toleration seems more likely than coercion to make catholics. The fire of free thinking will burn itself out. Nor is it a "fond and fantastical prophecy" to foretel, that free inquiry will in time accomplish what anathemas and inquisitions in vain endeavoured to compel.

\* Plebs.

† Populus.

Most of them are proprietors of the soil ; and many of them the wealthiest and most influential natives.\* This great repartition of estate has necessarily a great and beneficial influence on the morals and sentiments of the people, which the laws are in general contrived to aid and confirm. The abolition of the rights of primogeniture, and of entails, and the statutes for regulating the transmission of property, are calculated to prevent the accumulation of the fortune of a family in the hands of any one of the children ; and by distributing it equally among them all, serve to exalt those sentiments of individual independence, which are the roots of patriotism. They are most attached

\* Not that I by any means subscribe to the sentiment of Mr. Jefferson, that husbandmen are God's chosen people. Far from it. They are more prone to intoxication, litigation, gambling and turbulence, than the inhabitants of cities. The popular insurrections that have threatened the peace of this government since the establishment of the present constitution, have broken out in the interior, remote from any large towns. The late attempt by Burr, was to have been perpetrated not by means of town mobs, but frontier settlers, or what are known here by the denomination of backwoodsmen. In countries where the peasants are so ignorant and poor as to be wholly under the influence of superiors, their laborious simplicity may be more useful to the state and more conducive to their own happiness, than the occupations of the lower classes in great towns ; especially in catholic countries, where the lawfulness of innocent recreations prevents a recurrence to vicious amusements. But, in the United States, the people are neither ignorant, poor, nor catholic ; and the virtues of contentment, industry and sobriety, are at least as common (if not more so) in cities as in the country.

to the soil, who own a part of it ; from which attachment spring love of country, glory, and that fine union of public with private feelings, which constitutes the strength and ornament of republics.\* In monarchies, these sentiments are confined to the great. The mass of the people to be sure instinctively love the spot of their nativity, but are seldom animated with that noble, personal, and selfish and obstinate zeal, which citizens feel for what they call their own. Hard labour and low wages stupify and vitiate the lower classes of most countries. But in the United States wages are very high, and hard labour is altogether optional. Three days' work out of seven yields a support. The lassitude and dissipation, which might be expected from so much leisure, are provided against by natural circumstances. On one side the sea, and on the other rich waste lands, present inexhaustible fields of adventure and opulence. The inducement to labour, the recompense, is so great, that the Americans, with the utmost facilities of subsistence, are a most industrious people. As in higher life, learning and assiduity are certain passports to preferment and celebrity, so in the occupations of trade, agriculture, and the sea, persevering industry, almost without a risk of disappointment, leads to comfort and consequence. The proportion of persons of large fortune is small ; that of paupers next to nothing. Every one is a man of business ; every thing in the progress of emulation and improvement. Universality of successful employment diffuses alacrity and happi-

\* See Montesq. *Grand. et Decad. des Rom.* c. 3.



ness throughout the community. No taxes, no military, no ranks, remove every sensation of restraint. Each individual feels himself rising in his fortunes ; and the nation, rising with the concentration of all this elasticity, rejoices in its growing greatness. It is the perfection of civilized society, as far as respects the happiness of its members, when its ends are accomplished with the least pressure from government ; and if the principle of internal corruption, and the dangers of foreign aggression, did not render necessary a sacrifice of some of this felicity, to preserve and perpetuate the rest, the Americans might continue to float in undisturbed buoyancy. The happiness, the virtue, and the most desirable character of a people at such a time, and under such circumstances, are most perfect, and should be most distinguished. But a dash of licentiousness already disturbs this happy equilibrium, and it must be overthrown by foreign or domestic violence, unless it be retrenched and protected.

From ignorance and bigotry, the common features of common people, the Americans have less to fear than from the opposite evils of faction and fanaticism. Propensities to the bottle, to conventicles, and to popular assemblies, are founded in enthusiasm, and fomented by freedom. A free and prosperous people will be infected with the lust for novelty ; a passion more easily diverted than subdued. It would be practicable for the American government to give such encouragement to public festivals and recreations, as might tend to allay popular restlessness, and to give the popular feeling an innocent and even



a patriotic direction. But at present, with all their fondness for public meetings, which is indulged in a numberless variety of associations, religious, political, convivial and social, greatly exceeding that of any other country, the Americans have few national festivals, and they are falling into disuse.\*

Perhaps this is not the scene for science, literature and the fine arts. Business and tranquillity are not their elements. The poets, painters, architects or philosophers of America are as yet neither very numerous nor eminent. But the Americans are by no means, as is often asserted in Europe, so absorbed in ignoble pursuits, as to be insensible to the arts that polish and refine society. The natural genius of man is very similar in all climates, and literary excellence has had charms for all civilized men in their turn. Why then should a free, rich and rising nation be lost to the noblest attractions, the groundwork for whose attachment to literature is broadly laid in a far more general dissemination of common learning, than any other people enjoy? There are few Americans, who cannot read and write, and who have not a competent knowledge of figures. Education is more a public concern here than in any other country. In the little state of Connecticut alone, there are not less than 1200 public

\* Peace and plenty have already somewhat infatuated the people of the United States,

Whose only grievance is excess of ease,  
Freedom their pain and plenty their disease;

which verse of Dryden's is much more applicable to them, than it ever was to the nation for whom it was made.

schools, which contain about 40,000 scholars at a time.\* The course of education, however, is in general short and superficial: adapted rather to the occasions than the perfection of the student. There is less of that minute division of employment, which obtains in older nations, and which has great tendency toward the extent and certainty of acquirements. But the number of schools is unequalled elsewhere: and in the several colleges there are probably about 2,000 scholars at a time.

For plain rudimental learning, and general, practical good sense, the Americans surpass all other people. The lower classes in England, and even in Scotland, are in this most important respect much their inferiors.

But the national character, in this point, is rather that of an almost universal mediocrity, than any particular intensity of acquirement. The literature of

\* See Miller's Retrospect for the number of public schools and scholars. For the circumstance I am about to relate, I cannot refer to such authority, but it may be relied upon as authentic; and is certainly most curiously indicative of the character of the people of New England—their fondness for learning and ardency of enterprise. In some of the colleges, the course of education is extremely cheap; so much so as to excite the ambition of many farmers and labourers' sons, whose funds would not be adequate to any expensive undertaking. The avenues of the law, the church, physic and advancement in public life, are all laid open to the bachelors of arts. But many who attain to this degree, commence their studies without a farthing in their pockets, and defray the charges of a collegiate education by funds earned at day labour during the vacations, or before they had entered upon their studies.

the country, to advance our view a grade higher, is rather solid than shining. But the vast number of newspapers, and periodical\* publications, the im-

\* It will not be lost sight of, that whatever is stated, is not intended as an abstract opinion, but merely with reference to effects on the genius and character of the American people. What temporal influence the subdivision of religious sects may have on the nation, as a nation, is endeavoured to be explained, without entering upon an examination of more serious results: and in like manner the effect of the number of newspapers and other periodical publications, on the genius and character of the people, is considered, without approving that effect, or rejoicing at the augmentation. I consider rational liberty, useful learning, and solid science, more endangered from what is called the freedom of the press, than from all the hosts of ignorance and tyranny. The discovery of printing has been incalculably beneficial to the mass of mankind, but like all other benefits this is susceptible of corruption and abuse. The magazines, reviews, and newspapers that are spreading over the face of Europe and North America, threaten to deface and obliterate every vestige of the good sense and information to be derived from well chosen reading and unprejudiced inquiry. In the United States particularly, where the people in general are so well informed, there is less occasion than in any other country, for these little lights; and more occasion and a better atmosphere, than in any other, for the great luminaries of science and instruction. A malevolent system of uncandid criticism, dictated by no principle of impartiality or improvement, but directed with a single eye to circulation, sale and profit, is the ill-suited vehicle upon which most modern performances in letters are ushered into the world. And the newspapers of England and the United States, almost without exception, from being the repositories of politics and intelligence, have become the mere base organs of faction, ribaldry and sedition. Any obnoxious individual, however fair his character, may be written down with impunity, and consigned to obscurity, perhaps the grave:



mense importations from Europe of books of every description, and their continual sale at very high prices, the printing presses, the public libraries, the philosophical and literary institutions, and, above all, the general education and intelligence of the community, most effectually refute the charges of indifference to literature and science. Germany and England are the only countries where more books are annually published ; and in neither of these, though their original writers are more numerous, is the number of readers so great as in the United States. Nor in either of those or any other country whatever, is a genius for writing or speaking a more useful or com-

any meritorious work, before the public can pass its judgment, may be destroyed by reviewers, who fatten on the dissection, while the author perishes for want. Criticism was once accounted the most difficult of all arts, to which none pretended but the few whom great experience, profound knowledge and imposing abilities had created censors ; who applauded to encourage, and corrected to improve. But now it is become the trade and mystery of those who have not capacity or industry for any other ; who approve as they are paid or propitiated, and condemn from motives of faction, malice and ignorance. To be the editor of a newspaper it was once thought necessary to possess some information and character, and to practise some candour and liberality. But this respectable occupation has become the last resort of broken fortunes or a blasted fame. That free political inquiry is indispensable to republican liberty, I am far from denying : but I venture to predict that a licentious press will prove fatal to the constitution of any country in which it is tolerated. Letters and liberty are alike endangered from this corruption of the greatest improvement dispensed to man. It is an alloy, which must never be suffered to exceed its due proportion, however difficult the separation may prove ; or the metal is not worth preserving.



manding endowment than in this. The talents displayed in the American state papers, both for composition and legislation are seldom contested. Independent of several public literary works, of sterling and of brilliant merits, almost every state has its historian and other writers : and statistical, professional, commercial, scientific and especially political treatises, are the offspring of every day, and multiply at a prodigious rate. It is not every year, in any country, that produces the *mæonii carminis alite*, which blooms, like the aloe, hardly once an age.

In all the useful mechanic arts, in common and indispensable manufactures, as well as in not a few of the more curious and costly fabrications, in agriculture both practically and scientifically, in the construction of houses and ships, they rank with the most advanced nations of Europe, and very far surpass some, who upon no better pretension than a higher national ancestry, presume to consider the Americans as totally unacquainted with refinements, which in fact they understand and enjoy much better than themselves. Their architecture is always neat and commodious, often elegant, and in some instances, grand and imposing. In their labour-saving machinery, in their implements of husbandry, and domestic utensils, they are a century more improved than the inhabitants of France and Spain.

When we leave the province of utility, and approach the regions of elegance, or the depths of erudition, it is true they are in a state of minority, when compared with the most improved nations. Some

arts and studies require leisure and patronage, perhaps luxury, to foster them into maturity. Though of these the American soil is not entirely unproductive, yet such shoots as have appeared, are rare and spontaneous. There are few individuals with the means and inclination to be patrons: and the government has hitherto afforded little protection or countenance to such improvements.

Most foreigners impute this barbarian niggardliness on the part of the government to the spirit of a republican people, and the policy of their rulers; and I fear there are not wanting native Americans who consider the fine arts and republicanism incompatible. But how rude and false is such a sentiment! How offensive to the history and genius of republics!

Certain it is, however, that there is almost a total absence from this country of those magnificent memorials and incentives of distinction, which the fine arts, particularly those of statuary and painting, create and sanctify. There is scarcely a statue, structure or public monument to commemorate the achievements of their war for independence. The ground where the principal battles were fought, remains unconsecrated—the ashes of the patriots who died for liberty, uninurned—and every disposition toward a suitable emblazonment of those events and characters, which should be perpetually present to the nation, in every captivating form, has been repressed as inimical to the thrifty policy of republicanism. Thousands of pens indeed, and tens of thousands of tongues, vie with each other in their

panegyric. And more than one native pencil too has been dedicated to their immortalizing. But these are private effusions. The nation has not the honour of their creation; and remains to this day with scarcely one of those great and splendid edifices, obelisks and monuments, which should be scattered over the land with munificent profusion, to attach and inspire its inhabitants, and embody, identify, and preserve their national feelings and character. Patriotism must have shrines, or its ardour will relent. Permanent public memorials serve not only to invigorate the character of a country, and incite the best emotions of its citizens, but to embellish, civilize and make it happy. *Scilicet, non ceram illam, neque figuram, tantam vim in sese habere; sed memoria rerum gestarum eam flammam egregiis viris, in pectore crescere; neque prius sedari quam virtus eorum famam atque gloriam adæquaverit.*

In those efforts which are the production of genius rather than erudition, particularly in the accomplishment of public speaking, the Americans have attained to greater excellence than other modern nations, their superiors in age and refinement. In the prevalence of oratory, as a common talent, in the number of good public speakers, in the fire and captivation of their public harangues, parliamentary, popular, forensic and of the pulpit, the English are the only modern people comparable with the Americans, and the English are far from being their equals. Popular representation and freedom of speech, several sovereignties, each one represented in a debating assem-



bly, always rivals and sometimes directly opposed to each other, cultivate and call forth the most striking powers of oratory; whose conceptions are facilitated by the grandeur of surrounding scenery, and sublimity of the images of nature. Not only oratory, but all the arts and sciences are said to flourish in a fresh soil: and Greece will ever remain an illustrious instance, that a cluster of commercial republics is eminently adapted to their propagation and perfection.

But there are circumstances both natural and moral, promotive or prejudicial to the interests of letters and the fine arts, that have operated on different nations and ages, which baffle research, and are indicated only in effects, not to be traced to any certain cause. Thus Sallust observes of the Greeks, that owing to their great genius for writing, their acts are more celebrated than they deserved to be: whereas the Romans did not write enough for their own renown. *At populo Romano numquam ea copia fuit: quia prudentissimus quisque negotiosus maxime erat: ingenium nemo sine corpore exercebat: optumus quisque facere, quam dicere; sua ab aliis benefacta laudari, quam ipse aliorum narrare, malebat.\** It is common in Europe to regard the American states with contempt, because, among other defects, of their supposed inaptitude for literary refinements: and the nonproduction of famous performances, is adopted as a proof of the poverty of their taste for

\* Sall. de Catil. s. 8.



literature, which is ascribed to commercial and republican habits and laws. I have endeavoured to show the falsehood of these premises. But admitting their correctness, does the inference follow? The Romans, who, as I have just shown, wrote very little, who were not a commercial people, and who, above all others, were addicted to theatrical spectacles, never had a tragic poet; and their few comic writers are inferior to those of Greece. Spain has been said to have produced but one excellent book, and that ridicules most others. Yet how mistaken our conclusions would be, if we inferred from the non-existence of tragic poets at Rome, that the Romans had no taste for tragedy, or from reading *Don Quixotte*, that the Spaniards were an ignorant or a lively nation.

There is no subject on which a liberal judgment should proceed so cautiously to condemnation, as that of the literary character of a cotemporaneous nation.\* The most distinguished scholars have been the most prejudiced, when they came to weigh the comparative merits of their own and other nations in this respect. Voltaire, notwithstanding all his learning and impartiality in the abstract, and Johnson, take their stations at the head of the prejudices of their respective countries. It is not, therefore, to be wondered at, that the English deny the charms of French poetry, or that the French cannot relish Shakespeare or blank verse.

\* *Aucun peuple n'est en droit de se moquer d'un autre*, says Voltaire, in *Disc. Prelim.* p. 129. *Es. sur les Mœurs.*

When a young people, not yet half a century advanced, have already exhibited a genius for oratory and legislation, and their general intelligence is so unrivalled as that of the Americans, we should be slow to conclude, from the paucity of their original writers, that they want an aptitude for composition, or a taste for literature and the arts. Since the invention of printing, and the improvements in commerce, the antiquated principles of gradual amelioration are no longer applicable to any people, especially not to the Americans. Rudiments are obsolete. As the discovery and first settlement of America were the results of, and simultaneous with, the reappearance of the arts and sciences during the 15th and 16th centuries, and as the inhabitants of this country have ever since, by the means of commerce and free presses, been intimately connected with all the most polished nations of the older world, their imitation of successive improvements has been close and constant, sometimes enlivened with distinguished discoveries and useful inventions of their own. While the shackles of a mother country laid upon their genius, it was necessarily somewhat restricted and mortified. The revolution called it forth to action, with all the ardour incident to such occasions. During the short period that has elapsed since their independence, freedom, prosperity and ambition have stimulated its powers; and setting aside two, or perhaps three, of the most enlightened empires of Europe, the literature, arts and sciences of the people of the United States of America, are equal, and their general information and intelligence superior, to those of any other nation.

A people so lately sprung from Europe, so closely connected with it, and so much younger in the annals of civilization, naturally adopts European customs. At the same time there being few rich, and no poor, there is less disparity, little luxury, and morals predominate over manners in this country. As civilized society rests on reciprocal concessions, its structure is most harmonious when they are best regulated; for, perhaps, the most we can say of human nature is, that it is capable of being rendered amiable by a reciprocity of good offices. The arts of hospitality and politeness, the alternation of business and pleasure, social assemblies, innocent recreations and good breeding, while they give zest to existence, undoubtedly tend to refine and cement society, and to render mankind more virtuous as well as more elegant. Up to the period of enervation, refinements mend the affections as well as the manners: but it is the misfortune of society, that civilization, after a certain point, begins to lose its seemliness; morals give way to manners, and character has no weight against rank, appearance or behaviour.

Though there are few men of very large fortunes in the United States, a great proportion are in easy circumstances, and hospitality and politeness are common virtues. Commercial people are said to be inhospitable.\* The English and the Dutch are the least hospitable people of modern Europe. But, in the United States, abundance overcomes the calculating spirit of trade, and the east and the south vie

\* Montesq. *Esp. des Loix.*



with each other in unbounded hospitality. Even this, by some of those Europeans who are preposessed against this country, may be accounted a remnant of simplicity at least, if not of barbarity. Savages are always hospitable. The Romans found it necessary to prohibit the lavish dispensation of this duty among the Germans. But in the exercise of such a virtue, we admire the vanquished more than their conquerors in its extinction.

The amusements of the Americans are gayer and less ferocious than those of the English. They are more addicted to dancing, for instance, and less to boxing, bull-baiting, and cock-fighting. Not that there is more ferocity in the English than in the American character. But the Americans have had opportunities, of which they have availed themselves, to lay aside certain savage attachments, which unbroken custom still maintains in England. Theatrical exhibitions, the sports of the field, and the pleasures of the table, are found by the Americans not incompatible with serious and lucrative occupations, and are followed with a general and increasing relish. Gaming and vitious dissipation are not unpractised, but more commonly by inferior than the better sort of people.

The prevailing vice is inebriety ; induced by the relaxing heats of the climate in the southern and middle states, by the absence of all restriction, and the high price of wages. From this odious imputation New England is exempt. But in every other part of the Union, the labourers, and too many of



the farmers, are given up to a pernicious indulgence in spirituous liquors.\*

Marriages in the United States are contracted early, and generally from disinterested motives. With very few exceptions they are sacred. Adultery is rare, and seduction seldom practised. The intercourse of the sexes is more familiar, without vice, than in any other part of the world ; to which circumstance may, in great measure, be attributed the happy footing of society. This intercourse, in some countries, is confined, by cold and haughty customs, almost to the circles of consanguinity ; in others, from opposite causes, it is unrestrained, voluptuous, and depraved. In the United States, it is free, chaste and honourable. Women are said to afford a type of the state of civilization. In savage life they are slaves. At the middle era of refinement, they are companions. With its excess they become mistresses and slaves again. North America is now at that happy mean, when well educated and virtuous women enjoy the confidence of their husbands, the reverence of their children, and the respect of society, which is chiefly indebted to them for its tone and embellishments. The unobtrusive and insensible influence of the sex is in meridian operation at this time ; and as the company of virtuous women is the

\* The prevailing drink of some nations affords a partial index to their characters. The champagne of the French, the malt liquor of the English, the whiskey of the Irish, the gin of the Dutch, the rum of the southern, and the cyder of the eastern Americans, are respectively somewhat indicative of their national temperaments.

best school for manners, the Americans, without as high a polish as some Europeans acquire, are distinguished for a sociability and urbanity, that all nations, even the most refined, have not attained.

Commerce, which equalizes fortunes, levels ranks; and parade and stateliness can be kept up only where there is great disproportion of possessions. Expensive establishments, splendid equipages, and magnificent entertainments, are sometimes copied after European models. But they are neither common nor popular. It is difficult and invidious to be magnificent in a republican country, where there is no populace, and so many members of society have where-withal to be generous and hospitable. A plentiful mediocrity, a hearty hospitality, a steadier and less ostentatious style of living, are more congenial with the habits and fortunes of the Americans.\*

\* The United States of America seem to have incurred the obloquy of Europe, in proportion as their happiness and power have increased; and now that they are the happiest and least depraved people in the world, others are industriously taught to despise them as the most vitious and miserable. Most countries have suffered in their estimate from the ignorance and antipathies of others, and the misrepresentations of prejudiced travellers and voyage writers. But on this in particular the overflowing phial of falsehood and opprobrium has been emptied. That the genius and character of the people should be misconceived and underrated, is, perhaps, less to be wondered at, than the pictures, alternately fulsome and disgusting, which have been drawn of the state of society, morals and manners; because these can hardly be mistaken by an actual observer; and none other, it might be supposed, would attempt them. When Buffon and D'Aubenton exhibit nature as niggardly, and her offspring as dwarfish and thwarted in

Having thus sketched the situation of this country, religious, political and social, let me hasten to such results as have not appeared in the course of the

America, compared with their species in Europe, such egregious errors are easily assigned to no uncommon cause—a deficiency of practical knowledge. And when the Abbé Raynal, erring from the same cause, on the opposite extreme, taking it for granted that a young and agricultural community must be industrious and virtuous, unpractised in the luxurious refinements of cities and higher civilization, fills a page or two with flattering delineations of their primeval and *bucolic* characteristics; grouping the swains of Florida, Virginia, and Canada altogether in the same paragraph, dressed out in the florid colours of his own imagination, in defiance of all truth, and without the least appearance of even geographical propriety, while we smile, we cannot be surprised at his blunders. But when writers, with the advantages of actual observation, portray the society of these states in the disgusting shades of vulgar, unrelieved depravity, those, whom similar opportunities have made acquainted with the glaring falsehood of these pretended likenesses, are at a loss to account for the motives of their creation; and can ascribe them to nothing but the operation of national prejudice on minds charged with an unusual portion of that popular and universal jealousy. Europe, unwilling to admit that a region so lately peopled from its superabundant population, should be any thing more than a feeble scion from the parent stock, unworthy to be considered as an equal, much less a rival, destined one day to surpass and overshadow the parent stock itself, has disregarded the evidence of nature and history with respect to this country, and received all her impressions from the most perverted and unfounded intelligence. Would such monstrous absurdities be tolerated else as the visions of Brissot and the cumbersome tattle of Liancourt; the ridiculous stories of Weld; the singsong wanderings of Anacreon Moore; and the numberless equally



retrospect, and to some brief reflections on that commercial spirit, whose infusion is supposed to debilitate and debase the whole. It must always be borne

preposterous accounts and opinions that are perpetually issuing forth, in various shapes, from different quarters of Europe, pouring their ignorance and arrogance on America? It is not surprising that the lower orders of Europe generally believe the Americans to be copper-coloured, when the communications of statesmen, and the disquisitions of literati, are the first to proclaim and sanction all the narrow prejudices that prevail there on this subject. One of the last and most contemptible of those who have endeavoured to defray the expenses of a tour through the United States, by the publication of a volume of travels, is an individual distinguished for his genius and erudition, a scholar and a poet, over whose mind, therefore, illiberal prepossessions should have less sway, than over the mere itinerants and travel-wrights of the age. I allude to Anacreon Moore, who is so entirely the slave of prejudice when his pen is exercised on this country, that it is bereft of all its magic, and he dwindles into a poor epitome of common-place calumnies. He left England to take upon him some little office in the "still-vex'd Bermoothes;" and not liking the situation, came friendless and pennyless to the American continent, with no other recommendation than his enchanting talents for music; with which passport he sang his way through some of the chief towns, loitering where he was bidden, and almost piping for a meal; of course without any means of knowing or appreciating the inhabitants. Yet, on his return, necessity drove him to manufacture a paltry, malignant duodecimo, disgraceful alike to his head and his heart; in which, after dealing out his ingratitude in as much prose as he could produce on the occasion, he falls away into rhyme, as grovelling as his usual strains are lofty, and spits the remainder of his contemptible venom in doggerel and recitative. Goldsmith, who travelled over Europe on foot, with a wallet on his shoulders, has



in mind, that estimates of national character are to be formed from that class of the community, whatever it may be in different nations, which is the largest,

declared that to be the only plan of becoming conversant with the real manners of a nation. But certainly a pauper or hurdy gurdy grinder, who is seldom admitted beyond the outer gates of the better sort, and then not as a guest or an equal, but as a part of their entertainment, however intimate he may become with the kitchens and the ale-houses, cannot be a very competent judge of the state of society; and it is natural that his accounts should be limited by his experience, or wherever they exceed it, be arbitrary and untrue.

The labours of this class of writing travellers in America have been seconded by those of another, who, as their writings are confined to bills of exchange and accounts current, have contented themselves with being oral haberdashers of small stories and retailers of ribaldry. Swarms of noxious insects swept from the factories and spunging houses of Europe, after enjoying a full harvest of emolument and importance in the cities of this country, return to their original insignificance at home, to buzz aspersions through their "little platoons of society," and then come back again to bask in the sunshine they feign to slight. Apprentices and understrappers, mongrel abbés, and *gens d'industrie*, in the course of their flight over the Atlantic, are transmuted into fine gentlemen and virtuosi, shocked at the barbarian customs of this savage republic; the hospitality of whose citizens they condescend to accept, while they commiserate and calumniate their hosts, and consider it their especial errand and office to vilify, disturb, and overturn the government. The time was when these sturdy beggars walked without knocking into every door, taking *the chief seats in the synagogue, and the uppermost rooms at feasts, devouring widows' houses*, reviling with impunity the food they fed on. But so many ludicrous, and so many serious explosions have gone off of these transatlantic bubbles, so many individuals have been put to shame,

and constitutes the most important portion of the population ; especially when the Americans are the subject ; inasmuch as they have, in fact, but one class

so many respectable families to ruin, by their polluting contact, that the delusion is broke, and they begin to be seen in their essential hideousness. Persons of condition from abroad have so often proved to be ostlers and footmen, and men of learning mountebank doctors, that the Americans find it necessary to shake these foreign vermin from their skirts, and to assert a dignity and self respect, which are the first steps to that consideration from others, hitherto by this excrescent usurpation repelled from their society.

*Hic nigra succus loliginis, hæc est  
Erugo mera.——*

At the inn, where I lodged on my first arrival, it was my fortune to be assorted at every meal with half a dozen agents from the manufacturing towns of England, some Frenchmen, exiled from St. Domingo, a Dutch supercargo, a Chinese mandarin, as a caitiff from Canton entitled himself, the young Greek, a copy of one of whose letters I sent you some time ago, and a countryman of mine ; all of whom, after a plentiful regale, and drinking each other's healths till their brains were addled with strong liquors, would almost every day chime into a general execration of the fare, climate, customs, people, and institutions of this nether region. One of the Englishmen, a native of Cornwall, who never was out of a mist in his life till he left the parish of his birth, complained of the variableness of the weather ; another of the badness of the beef ; and a third of the porter, alleviations, without which they pronounced existence insupportable ; taking care to accompany their complaints with magnificent eulogiums on the clear sky, cheap living, and other equally unquestionable advantages of their own country, with occasional intimations thrown in of their personal importance at home. The Cre-

of society. But in any nation a few individuals, of either the higher or lowest class, are not to be adopted as national types, nor the impressions they com-

ole French, in a bastard dialect, declaimed at the dishonesty and fickleness of the Americans, the demureness of their manners, and provoking irregularity of the language; winding up their phillippic with a rapturous recollection of the charms of Paris; where, in all probability, no one of them ever was, except to obtain passports for leaving the kingdom.

They talk of beauties that they never saw,  
And fancy raptures that they never knew.

The Chinese, who never was free from a sweat till he doubled the Cape of Good Hope, and who, when in Canton, never forgot in his prayers to implore the blessings of a famine or pestilence, catching the contagion of the company, and mechanically imitative, though he could not speak so as to be understood, endeavoured by signs and shrugs to show that he suffered from the heat, and gave us to understand that an annual plague must be inevitable in such a climate. The Irishman, who swallowed two bottles of claret with a meal, besides brandy and malt liquors, swore the intemperate weather gave him fevers. The Hollander smoked his phlegmatic pipe in silence, looking approbation; and the complying Greek nodded assent, while at table, to every syllable that was uttered; though he afterwards coincided with me in a contradiction of the whole. When I was formerly in America, I knew several foreigners, then well stricken in years, who had resided here since the peace of 1783, always grumbling over the privations of this country, and sighing for the moment that should once more present them to the enjoyments of their own; most of whom I have seen since my present visit, living exactly where and as they were, grumbling and sighing as usual; but fat and satisfied, and indulging not the least expectation of ever exchanging their forlorn state here for their brilliant prospects elsewhere. Like a well-fed cu-



municate, received as the national character. Our opinions of the French or English would be greatly erroneous, if our inquiries were circumscribed to Paris or London.

rate, they dwell for ever on the fascinations of futurity, as contrasted with the wretchedness of mortality, recommending all good men to hasten from the one to the other, but without any wish for themselves to leave this world of tribulation.

But the arrant misrepresentations of this country, which philosophers and historians, travellers and talebearers seem to have conspired to impress on the ignorance and prejudices of others, would not have had the permanent and extensive effect they have had, both here and in Europe, had they not been adopted, patronised and disseminated by those native Americans, of whom, the number, though daily diminishing, is still too great; who, awed by perpetual comparisons with the superior refinement, power, intelligence, and happiness of Europe, have been rebuked into concessions of their own inferiority. That involuntary feeling of respect, with which the American colonists were accustomed to regard Europe, particularly their mother country, it will require a generation or two to wear out. By European individuals it is asserted on all occasions; by many American individuals it is almost as often, sometimes unconsciously, acknowledged, on one side enforced, on the other conceded, to such a degree, as to mark, not indeed the character of the country, for the country in general neither feels nor avows it, but the characters of many respectable and influential individuals, with a tameness and subserviency they themselves are not aware of; which pervade every department, particularly those of social life and the higher classes; and carry abroad among the many who adopt these individuals as types of the nation, those opinions which are so prevalent of its want of an original national genius and character. It is this colonial spirit which causes incessant struggles between an instinctive love of country and an habitual veneration for what is European: in which



A republican federation, a free press, general education, abundant subsistence, high price of labour, a warm climate, habits of intemperance, a variety of

struggle the latter feeling too often predominates ; and with many native Americans of education and affluence, who are by no means deficient in personal independence, the first emotion toward what is American is contempt, the first emotion toward whatever proceeds from that nation of Europe, to which they happen to be most attached, is reverence and admiration. If a custom, production, or institution be American, it costs them an effort to approve ; but if foreign, they submit to it with implicit faith. They depreciate not only the politics, literature, science and language, but the morals, manners, and state of society, according to the reduced scale of foreign detraction. But this is not the spirit of the people, but of those small sections, who claim to be their betters. A servile postponement of their own natural and manly habits to the most preposterous European usages, a thirst after the company and alliance of foreigners in preference to their own countrymen, an affected reluctance to live and die where they were born, are some of the symptoms of this miserable disease, infinitely more miserable and less pardonable than its opposite *la maladie du pays*. A state of society in the meridian of refinement and virtue, midway between simplicity and corruption ; gay and polite, without being profligate ; shedding the selectest influence of domestic comfort and public tranquillity ; to the eye of depravity may present but a homely and insipid scene ; but to such as love manly employment and rational recreation, is an enviable state, whose unequalled blessings they do not deserve to partake, who are not grateful for being born in the country where they flourish. Sentiments of repugnance in the natives of such a country are only tolerable, while they remain passive and latent. Whenever they break out into declared opposition, they become obnoxious to detestation and punishment. Such as cannot subdue them, are to be pitied ; such as encourage them, ab-

religious creeds, and the universal sensation of improvement and increase, naturally concur to the constitution of a well informed, ardent, enthusiastic, enterprising and licentious people. Where every man is a citizen, every citizen a freeholder, able and allowed to think, speak, and act for himself, the empire of opinion must be omnipotent: and it is impossible that a free and thinking people can be without a cha-

horred. They are guilty of the most fatal species of treason—not that which boldly devotes a country to stratagem, blood and destruction—but that more insidious and more certain hostility, which flows in unseen perennial channels, traducing, betraying and assassinating. Of such as these there can be, I trust, but few in this happy country.—Wretches, who have no God, household, or supreme—the creeping things of the earth, who feed on the offals of foreigners—who lick the foot that tramples on them—who are despised by all others, even those they worship, and must despise themselves.

Breathes there the man, with soul so dead,  
Who never to himself hath said

This is my own, my native land !

Whose heart hath ne'er within him burned,  
As home his footsteps he hath turned,

From wandering on a foreign strand !

If such there breathe, go, mark him well ;

For him no minstrel raptures swell ;

High though his titles, proud his name,

Boundless his wealth as wish can claim ;

Despite those titles, power and pelf,

The wretch, concentr'd all in self,

Living, shall forfeit fair renown,

And, doubly dying, shall go down

To the vile dust, from whence he sprung,

Unwept, unhonour'd, and unsung.

racter. Enterprise, public spirit, intelligence, faction and love of country are natural to such a people. No series of ages is requisite to form or consolidate their character. At the earliest date the legend is most decided; and though it may be aggravated, is seldom improved by years or refinements.

Wherever we find foreign commerce, there also we find polished manners.\* It is commerce that harmonizes the intercourse and dissipates the prejudices of nations; softens their native peculiarities, and approximates their national characters to one common standard.† Commerce, and trade, and manufactures, grew under the same shade in which learning flourished.‡

Such opinions, from such authority, are unanswerable. It is to North America only that their justice is denied. In Europe at least it is a prevailing notion to associate the commercial habits of the United States, with sordid fraud, a distaste for noble pursuits, and a dread of war: and the Americans have incurred the odium and contempt, which will be the lot of any nation that is considered by others to be tame, mercenary and base-spirited. But the policy of the government has been mistaken for the genius of the people. Alert, impetuous, alive to news and public discussions, the vibrations of popular sympathies are in no country so rapid and pervading.

\* Montesq. *Esp. des Loix*, l. 20. c. 1.

† Robert. *Charles V.* vol. 1. s. 1. p. 97.

‡ Burke's *Reflect. on the French Rev.* p. 115.



As individuals, and as a community, they have exhibited and continue to exhibit every day, the most decided proofs of courage and impetuosity.

The appeal to duels for the decision of private disputes is more frequent in the United States than in any other country whatever : and these private combats are conducted with a scientific ferociousness, and terminate in general with a fatality unknown elsewhere. The severest statutes have in vain pointed their artillery against this chivalric custom, which seems to be inveterate among impassioned and opined freemen. It is certain that men have become less free, less courageous, less disposed for great enterprises, than they were in the days of Rome and of suicide, when, as Montesquieu expresses it, they appear to have been born with a greater aptitude for heroism,\* and by exerting this inconceivable power over themselves, could bid defiance to all other human power. The modern duel is an offspring of this heathen sacrifice, in which similar causes lead to nearly the same effect. The prevalence of the *Catonis nobile lethum* of the Romans may not be an evidence of their good sense or their fortitude ; nor the frequency of fatal duels in this country of the superior bravery of its inhabitants. But they prove at least the sensibility of both to that romantic and inexplicable point of honour, which, however indefensible its votaries may be in the eyes of both God and rational man, has ever been a shrine sacred to the brave and high minded.

\* Montesq. Grand. et Decad. c. 12. p. 134.



As a community, the Americans have always shown themselves no less forward, than as individuals, to face their enemies and aggressors. In most countries it is the government that provokes, declares and maintains wars. But the United States have exhibited continual struggles between the government and the people, in which the latter have been clamorous for hostilities, at one time with one foreign power, at another time with another, while all the influence and forbearance of their rulers has been exercised to restrain this martial intoxication. The revolution was lighted up by a national instinct for independence, called early into action by the allurements of liberty and republicanism; when certainly no incapacity for war was evinced. How illustrious indeed should the conduct and termination of that contest render the Americans, when contrasted with the pusillanimous facility with which the most compact and warlike nations of Europe have lately fallen under the arms of their invaders! The American colonies would not have ventured a war single-handed with the first maritime power of the world, about a trifling tax on tea, had not that military impulse, which inflamed alike the sturdy east, and the impatient south, prompted them to unite for the assertion of their independence. It was not oppression that goaded them upon emancipation. But their instinct for liberty: as the author of their epic, with his peculiar propriety of expression, describes their feelings at the time,

“Fame fir’d their courage, freedom edg’d their swords.”

A long interval of profound tranquillity and multiplied commerce may have tarnished the fame, perhaps relaxed somewhat the tone of this people. But it was the government, not the nation, who compromised with endurance for emolument; and the same spirit which was once displayed, is still ready to show itself when summoned into action. The same valour, good faith, clemency and patriotism still animate the bosoms of America, as the first burst of their hostilities, whenever it takes place, will convince their calumniators.

Legitimate commerce, instead of demoralizing or debasing a community, refines its sentiments, multiplies its intelligence, and sharpens its ingenuity. Where are the evidences to the contrary in this country?—The Americans, far from being a sordid or venal, are not even a thrifty people. Subsistence is so easy, and competency so common, that those nice calculations of domestic economy which are a branch almost of education in Europe, are scarcely attended to in America; and that long, disgusting catalogue of petty offences, through which the lower classes of other nations are driven by indigence and wretchedness, has hardly an existence here, though death is almost proscribed from the penal code. Native Americans are very seldom to be met with in menial or the laborious occupations, which are filled by blacks and foreigners, mostly *Europeans*, who are also the common perpetrators of the smaller crimes alluded to. Though the government is supported by the customs, and the punishments for their contravention are merely pecuniary, yet such delinquencies are infinitely less frequent than in Europe or even Asia. The

salaries of the public officers are very inconsiderable : yet malversation is a crime of rare occurrence ; and that essential venality, which pervades almost every department of government in other countries, is altogether unpractised in this.

In their foreign traffic the Americans have been exposed to all the contumelious indignities which superior power and rapacity could inflict. But have the accusations charged upon them been substantiated ? When a young and unarmed people have no other reliance for their advancement than their industry and acuteness, and nevertheless, owing to these and their territorial advantages, succeed against the jealous restrictions and overwhelming maritime strength of older states, it is as natural for the latter to stigmatize them with dishonesty and encroachment, as it was for Rome, when Carthage was half subdued, to proclaim the instability of Punic faith. But the charge contradicts itself : for how could the Americans pursue a successful and augmenting commerce, if their frauds were as numerous as they are declared to be, after the whole world are put on their guard, and in arms, to suppress them ? The American merchant can have no other convoy than his neutrality and fairness : and if he have common sense, must perceive that honesty is his only policy. The unfairness with which the trade of these states is charged, is ascribable, not to the American, but to the many desperate foreigners, who assume a neutralized citizenship for the designs of dishonest speculation, and in too many instances abuse the privilege by simulation and iniquity.



While universal occupation, agricultural, mercantile and professional, imbues society with its spirit of punctuality and exactitude, poverty does not vitiate the lower, nor profligacy distinguish the higher classes. The laws of honour, as we have seen, have been adopted in their fullest rigour; and infractions of good faith or propriety are liable to the loss of character, of fortune, and of life itself: nor is there any community, among whom the temptations to debasement are less powerful, or where the laws and morals combine to oppose a more effectual restraint on those crimes that cause it.

5. A view of the resources and prospects of the United States necessarily involves some consideration of that commercial capacity, by which they are connected, as regards their intercourse with the rest of the world, and as it affects them with the policy and revolutions of other great commercial empires. I have endeavoured to show that trade does not impoverish, deteriorate or demoralize. But this must be understood with reference to spontaneous trade, the offspring of superfluous agriculture, or superior arts. The commerce which furnishes a national revenue, which cultivates an inexhaustible territory, and may at any moment be modified or suspended with no heavier grievance than a temporary deprivation of profit, should not be confounded with that exotic traffic, for whose products a nation neglects its agriculture, which is protected by navies that cost eternal wars, and impoverishes the people that it may magnify the state. It is natural for an exuberant country to throw off its annual superfluities, *whose revenue is*



*the harvest of the river, and who is a mart of nations ;* but it is as unnatural as fatal to stretch every sinew till it cracks, in commercial efforts.

With the benignant influence of free trade, nothing is more militant than the baneful spirit of monopoly. The latter, like all other systems founded on injustice, is of temporary advantage and ultimate ruin to its supporters. A warlike nation may extend their dominion by arms, in defiance of the opposition of others. But commercial aggrandizement to the prejudice of the rest of the world, attempted by any one people, is a position that cannot possibly be long maintained. Exclusive restrictions, with whatsoever art and power fortified, may for a time attract an excessive proportion of traffic and grandeur to any particular state ; but they inevitably draw upon it, at the same time, the jealousy and hostility of all others. It is the fate of national monopolies that by the time they have completely succeeded, the whole world is in league to beat them down ; and the state which wages war for their perpetuation, must either surrender them when they are most productive, or sink at last, exhausted by its own exertions, overcome by its multiplied enemies. Independent of the reasoning that suggests itself in support of this opinion from the common operation of cause to effect, an historical examination of monopolies, as they have been successively attempted by different empires, will show that there is scarcely one, which, after a short and specious show of greatness, has not recoiled destructively on its contrivers. Venice, Portugal, Holland, Spain and England are fatal testimonies of the disaster and

destruction, in which these flattering expedients must terminate. England indeed is still a great power : but however successfully she may resist subjugation, it is impossible she can hold for ever the pretensions she sets up against all the world. The cruel impolicy of the Spanish commercial system was long exemplified in the impoverishment and decline of the peninsula, and the ignorance and retardment of South America. And Spain is now undergoing the results of her parsimonious sequestration of those immense resources, which, under proper government, would have enriched and made happy all her extended realms. Smuggling, contraband, blockades, searches, are the immediate offspring of monopoly. Commercial frauds increase in proportion to the belligerent prohibitions opposed to them. Simulation on the one hand becomes as indispensable as rapine on the other, till at last the maritime intercourse of states will become so distorted, as to exhibit one universal scene of tolerated piracy.

A war for commerce destroys the very object it is waged to maintain. Europe has been drenched in desolation for commercial advantages, which have taken refuge in the pacific policy of the United States. While the incalculable resources of so large a portion of Asia, Africa, and South America, remain unemployed, the dreadful havoc that has been committed during the last 20 years for the produce of a West-India island, or a little carrying or colonial trade, is an awful rebuke to the boasted scientific and geographical improvements of modern times. Three fourths of the globe, and all their superfluities,

are scarcely known to the remaining fourth, which, with the lights of pre-eminent civilization, is wasting itself in wars for the comparatively inconsiderable remainder. The richest regions of the most extensive quarters of the globe are suffered to lie unexplored, while every endeavour is making to limit and prevent the extension of that commerce, which would bring the whole into active beneficence. Millions of lives have been uselessly and wickedly sacrificed, millions of happy and industrious beings thrown out of employment into idleness and want, millions of irredeemable debts contracted, all the pernicious consequences of using men to unjust laws and rapacious avocations incurred, and military despotisms made more common and tremendous than they were in the dark ages, by the infatuation which would establish national greatness on the perverted and tottering basis of navigation projects of exclusive aggrandizement.

Fortunately for America, and for the world in general, this state of things is not ascribable to the spirit of trade, but to the delusion of monopolists; and many indications appear of its approaching dissolution. It is probable that before the lapse of half a century mankind will look back with wonder and contempt to the narrow confines of that traffic, they are now destroying each other to restrain. We do not recur with more scorn to the awe with which the ancients regarded the Straits of Gibraltar, as the ultimate verge of the earth, than a succeeding, and probably the next, generation will to our strife for objects of such inferior moment, while others of in-



finitely greater magnitude were within our attainment. The ancients were withheld by an ignorance of those scientific discoveries, that have enabled the present race to traverse the remotest latitudes. But the latter are blinded by the common fatuity of avarice, which destroys lest others might possess.

Commerce, as thus permitted, is a pestilence and a scourge. We can hardly presume to despise the Chinese, while their impenetrable isolation shuts out the wars, as well as the arts, of more refined communities. But when it shall embrace the round of nations in a general commercial pacification, founded, not so much in treaties, as in those primordial principles of mutual convenience, which constitute the only permanent basis of national intercourse, the barbarous and the civilized will alike have reason to rejoice.

It seems probable that an entire change in the commercial machinery of the globe is at hand. Without a particular reference to the policy or the power of any one state, it is evident that so many have been driven to a due appreciation of the advantages of foreign trade, that they must finally compel a relinquishment of its monopoly by any one. The fourth dynasty of France may be precarious; but the impulse and policy it has originated will continue. In the north of Europe a great empire, and on this side of the Atlantic a powerful republic, are yet but developing those resources and principles, every effort of which will be directed, by a natural concert, infinitely stronger than any national compact, to the removal of all obstacles to the freedom of the seas.



Whenever this is accomplished, the uttermost ends of the earth will be unlocked to the researches of christianity and civilization. They will unbar the crowded regions of China and India, knock off the golden fetters of South America, and penetrate the almost fabulous regions in the interior of Africa. We shall be amazed to find that more than one half of the globe has been shut out from the benefit of commercial intercourse with the other, not by oceans and mountains, but by the perverse and sanguinary usurpation of monopolies. The wars, the frauds, the wretchedness, the demoralization, which have been falsely ascribed to the magnitude of trade, will appear to have proceeded from its restriction, and will disappear with the removal of their causes. The great source of bloodshed will be dried up; and, under the auspices of universal peace, ten thousand times the traffic, for which so many climes have been ravaged, will cover every sea, connecting and ameliorating all nations.

As the United States of America will have been among the principal promoters of this general amelioration, so will they be one of its largest partakers. For whatever may be thought of their national character or legislation, that they are eminently situated to become a great commercial people can hardly be denied. The extent and variety of their territories, the fruitfulness of their different soils, the prodigious structure of their internal navigation by means of the immense lakes and western waters, the reciprocal dependence of the different parts of the continent on each other, the capacity of all parts to

supply other countries with those superfluities they require, their remoteness and natural protection from the only powers that can injure them, their industry, freedom and affluence, insure a rapid augmentation of population, strength and prosperity.

Should the great events transacting in Europe lead to the independence of South America, new and incalculable advantages must accrue to both these portions of the western world. A vast natural alliance might be formed, capable of plans the most glorious and beneficial; an alliance that may set Europe at defiance.

It was the opinion of an eloquent and philanthropic historian,\* after considering the situation and prospects of this country, "that the only way to prevent disturbances among the people would be to leave upon their frontiers a powerful rival, always disposed to avail himself of their dissensions. Peace and security, says he, are necessary for monarchies; agitation and a formidable enemy for republics. Rome stood in need of Carthage. Venice, perhaps, would have lost her government and her laws four hundred years ago, had she not at her gates, and almost under her walls, powerful neighbours, who might become her enemies or her masters." In like manner, the Romans, says one of their most judicious writers, were free from faction and vice, while they had to make head against hostile neighbours: *metus civilis in bonis artibus civitatem retinebat*. And where a population is so dispersed as that of America, foreign

\* Raynal.

pressure certainly contributes to the tone of the national character and exertions.

But the speculations of statesmen and historians, the wisdom and experience of ages, the opinions of antiquity, the prejudices that were planted in our veneration, have all been swept away by the torrent of revolution and war that has lately rushed over the nations of Europe. The "temperate and undecisive contests,"\* which, it was foretold, would long preserve the many balanced sovereignties of that continent, have been superseded by a warfare more furious and overwhelming than had been supposed possible. New and bolder ideas of government and of tactics will prevail hereafter; and the American republic must endeavour to keep pace with the genius of the age, or sink under its expansion. It must not be forgotten, that as business is transacted for the attainment of pleasure, so occasional wars are necessary to the security and permanency of peace. As long as a people refrain from offensive hostilities, a military genius is an attribute deserving encouragement; and it is especially the interest of the United States to cultivate so much of a warlike spirit, as may not be incompatible with their republican institutions. They are not in a situation to desire conquests. Their territories rather need concentration than acquisitions. The seat of government is so remote from the scene where armies would be required, that the republic has little to fear from the ambition of commanders. And despotism is less to be dreaded from the regular maintenance of a suitable establishment, than from its sudden creation, in case of emergency, when dic-

\* Gibbon's Rom. Emp. vol. 6. p. 415.



tatorial powers are almost indispensable. Every general may not have the integrity of Washington.

In a most important respect the American republic has a vast advantage over all others that have preceded it; that is, in the extent of dominion, and dispersion of population. Athens, Rome, Venice, Carthage, most of the republics that have been, were at first confined almost to a single city, and always entirely influenced by the capital. So that pretorian guards, or ambitious men, by mastering the head, were sure of the extremities. But the same danger does not exist here. And as long as Canada and Louisiana remain even virtually under foreign influence, the same or a greater inducement exists for maintaining that most dignified of all national attitudes, the armed neutrality of a powerful republic. A military despotism, whether monarchical or republican, is the most odious and oppressive, the most disgraceful and destructive form of polity. In fact it is not a form, but a subversion of government, which, after destroying every thing else, at last destroys itself. It is a colossus, which falls as soon as its arm is no longer uplifted; from whose ruins petty tyrannies spring up; whose slaves are not entitled to enjoy till they assert the immunities of men, and which does not become a government till the supremacy of the law is re-established. But a dominant republican empire, with military force enough to defend its rights, without so much as to instigate an ambition to subvert them; just and respectable abroad, free and just at home; forms the most glorious consummation of national prosperity.



Lastly, have the United States of America resources for this attitude? Their resources have been, if possible, more underrated than their character. Their population now falls but little short of ten millions. With an inexhaustible territorial fund of wealth, without debts or taxation, with every abundance of munition and requisite for war, they have a greater strength in men with arms in their hands, than the Roman empire ever maintained at any one time, than the force with which Louis XIV. terrified all the powers of Europe combined, or with which the Duke of Marlborough and his auxiliaries drove Louis XIV. into the recesses of his palace. A militia of six hundred thousand men, undisciplined indeed, unofficered, and uninured to the tactics and hardships of a state of hostility, but hardy, athletic, adroit, and invincibly attached to their country and its liberties, are the raw materials at least for forming a formidable barrier to invasion. Much of the contumelious aggression the Americans have experienced from the European belligerents, is ascribable to their reliance on the defenceless and unprepared posture of this country.\* But a free and martial people, accustomed

\* The American navy is at once the glory and the shame of the American nation: the nursery of its martial genius, the chancery of its fame, the vestal guard of that spark, which however it may fade or darkle, can never expire without carrying with it all that ennobles, embodies and preserves a people. Among so small a number of individuals as compose the officers of this little navy, never did nor does there exist a more glorious spirit of chivalric valour and enterprise, superior nautical skill, and proficiency, discipline, subordination and concert in time of service, more gentleman-like deport-

to the use of arms, from whom the riflemen and sharp shooters that have become the most efficacious divisions of the armies of Europe, learned their manual, can never be totally unprepared for war.

ment, urbanity and unexceptionable conduct in society. There is no body of men so well deserving to be entitled the flower of the country. But the affair of the Chesapeake has drenched their laurels with more ignominy than all the waters of the Chesapeake can wash out: not only those implicated in that indelibly shameful transaction—but every officer in the navy—nay, every individual in the nation—and above all, the nation itself, still smarting unrevenged under such an infliction. Blood, blood alone can wash out that stain. An occasion, presenting itself, as if on purpose, to signalize their courage and capacity, which might have been the means of wiping off, in one memorable hour, all the aspersions flung from all quarters on the national reputation, and of stamping their name in the foremost file of courageous people, was suffered to sound the tocsin of their disgrace, carrying through all regions the lugubrious reverberations of their cowardice and incapacity.

If it were for no other purpose than to contradict and repel the foul consequences all the world must infer from this unspeakably infamous discomfiture, the American nation should apply all their zeal and efforts to the immense resources they enjoy for creating a respectable, a formidable navy—not such a navy as might alarm the jealous dominion of other powers—a navy of ships of the line—but such a navy as might serve to convoy and protect their universal commerce, preventing those infinite petty impositions and larcenies, that are perpetual provocations, without even being sufficient motives to war, as would render it always unnecessary to arm their merchant ships, thus putting arms into the hands of the inexperienced, rash and interested, as might at a moment's warning be ready to sweep the commerce of their enemies from every sea, as would serve to guard their coasts

Difficulties and enthusiasm have already made officers in America, and may again; and officers can make soldiers.

Like the vast wastes that were kept as a frontier by the ancient Gauls, the Atlantic ocean forms a perpetual natural protection of America from the in-

from daily insult and aggression, and their national character from habitual degradation—a navy of numerous, swift sailing, well appointed frigates.

If the expense of such an armament be objected to, I would ask what can be too expensive for the immense resources of this country, hitherto not half developed, and husbanded with miserlike timidity? If the risk of war, what is the end of deferring, of buying off, of bartering honour, right, property, every thing for procrastination and reprieve? War must come with power—and destruction must follow, unless some preparation be on foot for the exigency.

While the rage of innovation lasts, this visionary self-abandonment may endure. But whenever the policy of the country shall be settled, a navy must enter into, and constitute a principal part of that policy. It is indispensable. The power, the resources, the sources of subsistence, the honour, the character, the national existence of the American nation call aloud for this safeguard.

A navy of frigates would have effectually enforced the embargo: nor can the ordinary revenue laws of the United States be sustained without one. When, if ever, peace shall return in Europe, the ocean will swarm with pirates—in fact it does now—with little cockboat marauders—but at the return of peace, bucaniers and Blackbeards will infest every ocean and ransack every sail. No commerce will be safe without a navy to protect it: and the Americans must submit to be robbed and plundered, burned, sunk and destroyed in every latitude, or to be convoyed by the English, or some other friendly power, which will excite more jealousies, and prove in the end more expensive, than a navy of their own.



vasions of Europe ; a barrier sufficient in itself at present, while the only power that could become an invader is unable to keep the sea, which is ruled by a power unable to invade. At no distant day the stationary strength of Europe may be counterpoised by the increased strength of America ; and the current of irruption, which for so many thousand years has proceeded from east to west, having reached the limits of its action, may recoil, and trace back its steps from the populous and mighty west to the reduced and prostrate east.

From commercial depredations the United States may not, for some years, be exempt. But their present ability is more than a match for any force that can be sent over sea for their invasion. In both ancient and modern times, large military expeditions, which depended on naval coöperation, have almost always been unsuccessful. As they exhaust the nation that assembles them, it is impossible to repair disasters by fresh succour. If any one part be lost or destroyed, the others being more or less dependent upon each other, cannot act thus mutilated. The unavoidable slowness of such enterprises gives an opportunity for preparation to the other party. And tempests of the sea are perils of daily occurrence and insurmountable difficulty. Admitting, however, that by an uncommon coincidence of fortunate accidents, an invasion were effected, and that all North America might be overrun by an experienced, well appointed army, it would nevertheless be impossible to overcome the inhabitants, or reconcile them to a yoke. The means of escape, of subsistence, and of sove-



reignty, are without bounds, and no force or privation that an enemy could apply, would force a submission. War might ravage their fields, conflagrate their villages, sack their towns, and slaughter a part of their population; but those who remained would avoid subjugation by dispersion, or retirement to the seat of some new empire.

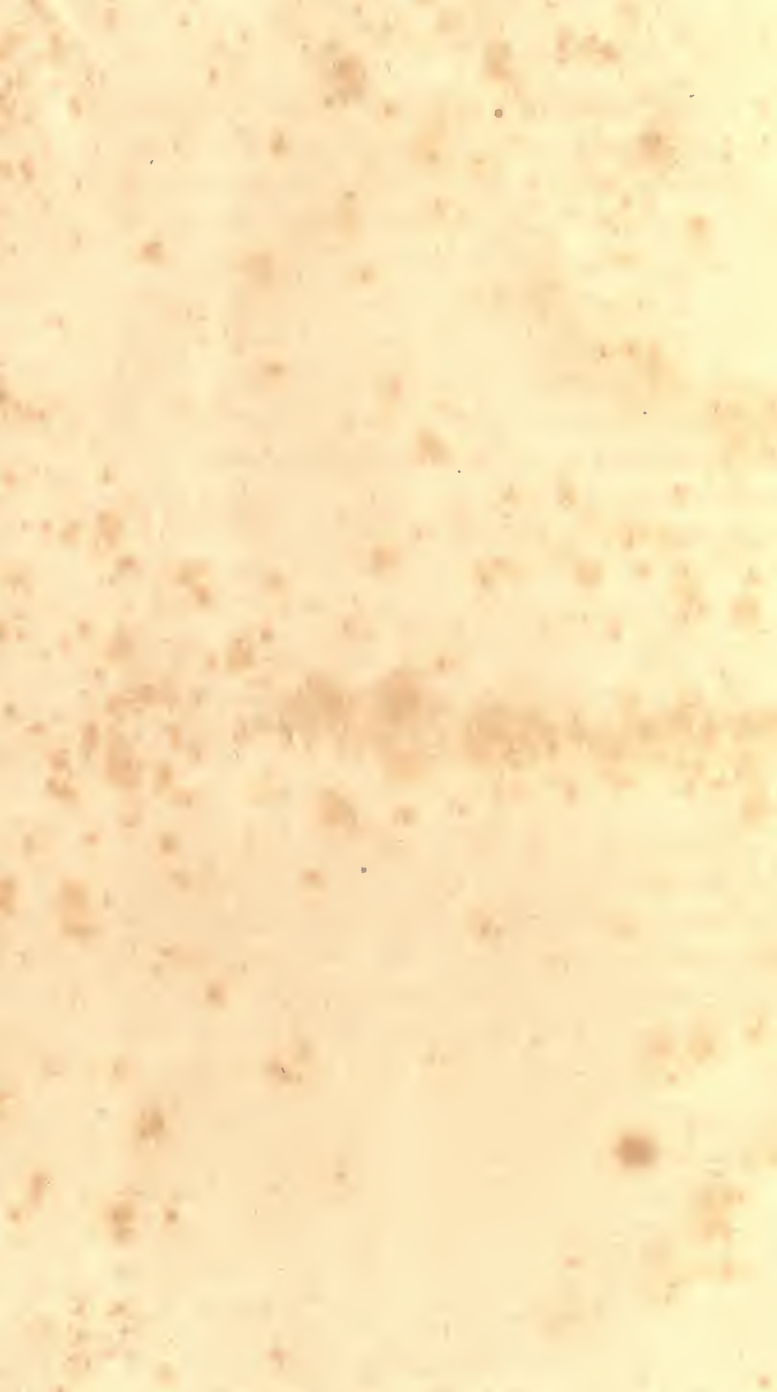
Thus at considerable length, and I fear little to your satisfaction, have I attempted to communicate those ideas of the American people, which have been formed from long acquaintance and deliberate examination. You may think my retrospect has too much the appearance of apology or panegyric. Into what errors I may have been betrayed by a partiality, which I am proud to acknowledge, I cannot determine; though a strict regard to the unexaggerated truth has guided my pen. Probably they are not the fewer from a feeling, which all along accompanied me, that I was repelling prejudices, the demolition of which was to be the first step toward my object. An affectation of contempt for America, is one of the only prejudices in which all the nations of Europe seem to concur. The soil, climate, productions, and creatures of this enviable country have been stigmatized as altogether inferior to those of Europe. And the gravest philosophers of the old world have led the way in these ignorant, absurd prejudices, against the new. The soil has been represented as parsimonious and abortive; the climate as froward and pernicious; the creatures as stunted, stupid, and debased below their species; the manners, principles, and government, as suited to this universal depravity. These

absurdities appeared engraved with the stamp of knowledge and authority ; their circulation was general and accredited ; and it is amazing how current they continue to this day, notwithstanding the proofs that have successively adduced themselves of their falsification and baseness. But it is time such opinions were called in, and a new seignorage issued, less alloyed with prejudice ; that Europe may be undeceived respecting a people, in many respects the first, and in none the lowest on the scale of nations.

















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